For Them

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For Them

by Geekygirl24

Summary

“This is the address." She confirmed, opening up the gate and heading onto the property, “I just… don’t understand what would make Will move into a place like this?”

“There is only one reason someone would move to a house like this.” Jack chuckled, “I do believe Mister Graham has been snatched up.”

Chapter 1

“Are you sure this is where he lives?”

Alana looked a little stunned as well, staring up at the quite lavish looking home. Yes, it was away from the main road, much like Will’s old home at Wolf Trap had been, but this-this was something else entirely.

It was a fenced off property (a simple wooden one, but still fenced off), at least three stories high, looking pristine on the outside.

It was also silent.

Not a dog to be seen or heard.

“This is the address.” She confirmed, opening up the gate and heading onto the property, “I just… don’t understand what would make Will move into a place like this?”

“There is only one reason someone would move to a house like this.” Jack chuckled, “I do believe Mister Graham has been snatched up.”

Alana hoped she was quick enough to hide the look on her face.

She just couldn’t imagine anyone who would choose a house like this, deciding to be with Will. Not that he wasn’t good-looking, but because... he wasn’t the Alpha that everyone wanted him to be.

He wasn’t the Alpha that society expected and to combat against that, Will chose to cut himself from the rest of the world, choosing his dogs over human contact.

“Alana?”

She flinched, looking at Jack, who was practically at the front door.

“Is everything okay?”

“Yes... I was just... thinking, that’s all.”

Thankfully, Jack was too consumed with the current case to worry about her. She stood by his side as he knocked on the door. A moment passed, before they heard movement inside, followed by the scrabbling of various claws.

The door opened up, and the last person Alana ever expected to be out here, answered the door.

“Doctor Bloom!” Doctor Hannibal Lecter, dressed in a soft looking jumper and black slacks, hair not in its usual neat hairstyle looked a little confused as he stood in the doorway, dogs milling around in the background “I must say, I wasn’t expecting to see you and- “he looked over at Jack, who rushed to introduce himself.

“Agent Jack Crawford, Head of the Behavioural Science division of the Baltimore FBI.” Jack cleared his throat, “We were hoping to speak to Will Graham, but maybe we have the wrong house?”

“No, no, you have the right house, but I'm afraid my husband is out fishing and won’t be back for another couple of hours.”

“H-husband?” Alana couldn’t keep her shock contained, only just registering a sweet, almost smoky smell coming from inside the home.

Omega.

She knew for certain that Will was an Alpha which meant that- that- that Doctor Lecter... her teacher, her mentor for so long was actually a-

“Ah.” Jack covered over Alana’s shock by clearing his throat again, “Then may we come in? We have something very important to discuss with him.”

One of the dogs barked behind Hannibal, their attentions turning to the source, missing how the omega tensed up slightly.

“As I said, it will be quite some time before he returns home.” A quick smile flashed across his face, “Maybe some other time?”

“Of course.” It was Alana’s turned to interrupt now, “Next time, we’ll call ahead.”

“Please, see that you do.” Any harshness was softened by the smile, “Another time then?”

“Another time.”

Alana practically dragged Jack back down the steps, not looking back even when she heard the front door shut.

How did she not know?

How did she not see it?

…….

Hannibal still felt tense as he closed the door, hearing the dogs whimper slightly, almost as though they knew how unsettled he was at that moment.

They probably did.

A little over fourteen years together with the majority of them had made them rather sensitive to his emotional shifts in scents.

Taking a deep, calming breath, he headed back into the kitchen, hearing the dogs stop at the boundary between the two rooms as he gave the small figure sitting on the floor a reassuring smile.

“It’s alright mano mažasis.” He walked over to the fridge, “Just a minor interruption. Now, where were we?”

“To-ma-toes.”

“Tomatoes, yes… please add them to the list.”

……

“Why are we going home Papa?”

How could Will explain it to her.

How could he do it without scaring her.

“I don’t think the fish were biting as much today.” He shrugged, “No reason to waste any more time. Not when your Motina wants to go shopping later.”

He could feel his daughter’s stare, piercing much like Hannibal’s, before she shook her head, “You’d stay out on the lake for hours if you could, and you have…. So, what’s really going on?”

“Thirteen and already so wise.” He teased her, knowing that his voice sounded weak, even to his own ears, “I just… had a bad feeling that’s all.”

“Like… the dogs creating a mess kind of bad, or the police are there kind of bad?”

“Just… alright, maybe not bad. Let’s call it uneasy instead.”

She nodded, picking up the pace as well as they entered their back-garden and then entered the home.

“Hannibal?” Will called out, the pair of them removing their muddy boots before going any further, “Hannibal?”

He heard tiny footsteps, as his son rounded the corner, a Pinocchio plush clutched in his arms, eyes widening at the sight of them before he was eagerly toddling over, giggling when Will swept him up into his arms.

The dogs were not far behind, all crowding around, eager for the attention.

“I sincerely hope that the rest of you doesn’t match those boots.”

At his omega’s calm tones, Will instantly felt relaxed, allowing his breath to leave him in a relieved sigh.

“Just the boots.” He confirmed.

“Hm, you two are back early.”

“Papa had an uneasy feeling.” Their daughter rolled her eyes, “But obviously you’re- “

“- Mischa.” Hannibal’s voice was firm, cutting through the attitude expertly, raising an eyebrow expectantly, only relenting when she muttered a soft apology, “As it so happens, Will’s instincts may… not have been entirely incorrect.”

Will frowned in confusion, as his son snuggled in a little closer.

“Loud man.” The child whispered.

“A… loud man was here?” Will looked up at Hannibal who nodded.

“An FBI agent, Jack Crawford.”

Heading further into the house, dogs still following him, Will surreptitiously looked around.

“I would not be that impulsive.” Hannibal sounded a little hurt by the insinuation, “Besides, he had a colleague with him. Doctor Bloom.”

“Alana?” Will turned “Why?”

“They wanted to speak to you.”

"… Why?"

Here, Hannibal paused, looking over at Mischa. "Could you please take Mikel and the dogs into the other room mieloji. Your Papa and I needed to have a word."

For a moment, it looked as though she was going to argue back, before relenting and taking her brother into her arms, carrying him into the other room, calling the dogs to her, before shutting the door.

"That attitude of hers is growing." Hannibal sighed, "Is it an Alpha thing or just a teenager thing?"

"Trust me, it's a teenager thing." Will chuckled, taking his omega into his arms, and scenting his neck, hoping to calm him down a little, "What's wrong?"

"…. I think they want you to go out into the field."

"Are you sure?"

"Why else would they come all the way out here?"

That, Will had to concede, was a good point. Yes, Alana could technically be classed as a friend, but certainly not one they invited round. She hadn't even been invited to their-

"Ah." He sighed, "I guess that's secret out of the bag then."

"So long as that's the only secret, I think we should be grateful." Hannibal pulled back slightly, a sly smirk on his face, "Anyone would think you were ashamed of me."

“Stop that.” Will pulled him close once again, spinning him around and pressing him up against the wall, “You know full well, that I am anything BUT ashamed of you.” He angled himself, so that Hannibal could feel just how un-ashamed he was, “Understand?”

Yes, he knew Hannibal expected this result, manipulated him into even, but it was still gratifying to see a light, almost undetectable flush on his omega’s cheeks.

And then there was a whine from the other room, prompting Will to rest his head against Hannibal’s shoulder wearily.

“Fond memories of making love against the wall?” Hannibal chuckled, gently pushing Will away.

“Fond memories of Mischa actually listening to us more like.”

Hannibal could understand the frustration, hearing another whine and quickening his pace, opening the door to the other room, to see Mischa dodging around the room, Pinocchio held just out of Mikel’s reach.

The whining was the dogs, as they jumped up a little as well, Winston sticking close to Mikel the entire time.

Hannibal cleared his throat, making Mischa stop in her tracks, yelping when Mikel kicked her on the shin, dropping the toy to the ground. The dogs all stopped their clamouring then, allowing Mikel to grab his toy. He did, then rushing over to Hannibal, who picked him up and held him close.

“Really?” He sighed, “You are nine years old than him Mischa, don’t you think you should be above petty bullying?”

Silence.

“Go to your room. We’ll discuss this later.”

“It’s okay.” Mikel quietly spoke up, “I won the game.”

Hannibal frowned, pulling back slightly to look his son in the eyes, “Game?”

Mikel nodded, “Mischa said that other kids are mean, and they might take things off me, so I have to know how to get them back.” The last word was said with a slight snarl, which made Will smile softly.

It was in moments like these, when Mikel sounded so much Hannibal, that he knew his youngest would present as an omega in the future.

“I’ll talk to her.” He whispered to Hannibal, hating the conflicted look on the other man’s face, “Go on.”

With one last glance at Mischa, Hannibal left, the dogs following on behind him.

Once they were along, Will took a seat on the sofa, patting the spot beside him. “I know I’m not the shrink in this family, but… talk to me?”

“… Some of the neighbourhood kids have been calling him names when we go to the park back in Baltimore.” She confessed, “What if I’m not there, he needs to learn how to take care of himself.”

Will felt his heart ache at the thought of some brats picking on little Mikel.

“This is why you speak to me or Hannibal.” He sighed, “We could have dealt with it.”

“You don’t kill children.”

“We know how to deal with things in a non-serial killer way.”

Chapter 2

“And you wonder why I’m happier home-schooling him.” Hannibal snarled an hour later, as he prepped the ingredients for their tea.

“I have never argued with your decision to home-school him.” Will sighed, “But, let’s be honest, a few kids are the least of our problems. You think Agent Crawford wants to bring me in to consult…. Has the Ripper made any kills that I’m not aware of?”

“No.” Hannibal rolled his eyes.

“Then why would he want me out there?”

“Why else would someone like Crawford, want someone like you.” The sound of the knife against the chopping board got harsher, “To use you. To use that beautiful mind and twist it for his own advantage, to further his own career as he leaves you behind.”

Will knew he had to choose his next words very carefully.

“Without you around, I think I would have struggled being out in the field…. But maybe this is a good opportunity for us.”

Hannibal paused, giving Will a sideways look as the Alpha moved closer.

“I know you’ve been struggling with the decision not to display your gorgeous work.” Will whispered, “What if… we could give you that chance again? If I work with the FBI, then I can push them away from you.”

“I’ve never been caught before.”

“It’s been close though.”

Hannibal couldn’t deny that.

It had been two years since the last confirmed Ripper killing and he’d been getting a little… antsy. The incident in his office had been too close for comfort.

The tense silence between them was suddenly broken by the ringing of the living room phone.

“That’ll be them.” Hannibal sighed, “I suppose we should be thankful for the fact that they called ahead this time.”

He moved to go and answer it, only for Will to reach out and grab his wrist.

“We bought this house so that we had a place to getaway at the weekend.” He whispered, “Let them wait until Monday.”

“We may not get a choice if they decide to simply show up again.”

“So, we take a little trip out on the boat, all four of us.” Will pouted, “Please?”

“… Mikel gets very boat sick.”

That was true.

The four-year-old had trouble with anything that wasn't solid ground. If he could walk back to Baltimore or walk to Wolf Trap at the beginning of the weekend, then he would.

"We'll have to face them sooner or later." Hannibal chuckled as Will let out a soft whine at the thought.

The phone stopped ringing, before starting up again almost immediately.

"Do you need me to get it?" Mischa called out.

"No need, I will handle it." Hannibal replied, heading over to the phone and disconnecting it from the wall, "There. Handled."

Walking back into the kitchen, he saw Will shaking his head fondly, "I love you." The Alpha whispered, "How did I live without you?"

"I think we can both agree, what you were doing before me was barely living." Allowing his fingers to trail over the stubble on Will's cheek, "My poor Will, trapped inside his own mind, unwilling to just… let go before you met me."

"My poor Hannibal." Will whispered back just as softly, "All alone… with no one to see who he really was."

Hannibal lunged forwards, pressing their lips together almost desperately, copper blooming across his tongue as his teeth bit at Will's lip.

"Vicious." Will whispered once they broke apart, the word coming out soft and fond, like a compliment, instead of the insult it was probably intended to be.

"Very." Patting Will's cheek, Hannibal turned his attention back to the meal preparation, "Can you get the liver from the fridge. I think we will keep it fairly light today."

“Homophobe or teacher?”

“Hmm, why not both. No reason we can’t indulge now and then.”

……..

Mikel patiently waited for all the suds to be washed out of his dark curls, before grabbing his bath shark, making it dive under before coming back up again, letting out a little scream of terror as yet another, innocent, rubber duck fell prey to it.

Hannibal loved him so much.

“Come mano mažasis.” He chuckled, “Let me wash behind those ears.”

How the back of his ears got so dirty, he would never know. At least with Mischa, it was easy to explain, given that she spent half her childhood in the mud, but Mikel preferred sitting in with Hannibal most days.

“There.” He ran a hand through the water, “A few minutes more darling, then out and time for bed, okay?”

Mikel nodded, still consumed with his shark game.

Hannibal could still remember the moment he first held him in his arms, hearing him crying for the first time and knowing that he was going to be okay.

It had been a few difficult years after Mischa’s birth, so Mikel was his little miracle baby.

So lost in his thoughts, Hannibal nearly missed the moment where the water got a little too cool for his liking.

“Alright.” he grabbed a warm towel, “Out we get.” He lifted the child out of the bath, immediately wrapping him up in said warm towel, unable to stop himself from rocking from side to side.

He would miss this when Mikel hit his growth spurt.

“What bedtime story would we like today?” He asked, drying Mikel off and helping him get into his pyjamas, “Perhaps an Iggle Piggle wonder piece?”

“Yes P’ease.”

“Please.”

“Please.”

“That’s my darling boy.” Once Mikel’s hair was mostly dry, he carried him to Mikel’s room, to settle him down for the night.

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“It’s not connecting at all.” Jack scowled in frustration, “Why do I get the feeling that Doctor Lecter is behind this?”

“Or Will knows what you’re going to ask him and wants no part in it.” Alana sighed, still coming to terms with the Hannibal/Will situation, “His empathy has probably helped him with that.”

She could still see that Jack was fuming through.

And when Jack was in one of these kinds of moods, the only opinion that mattered, was his own.

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“Three, two, one, go!”

Hannibal winced as Mikel nearly tripped coming down the steps in his rush to get to the Land Rover. “Careful!” he warned them, watching how Mischa pretended to twist her ankle, limping a little over-dramatically as Mikel rushed past her and beat her to the car.

“Oh! You win!”

“You look lost in thought.” Will’s amused voice whispered near his ear, “Something wrong?”

“Just a bad feeling, that’s all.”

“Oh?”

“It’s as though...we’re standing on the edge of a cliff, and one wrong step will send us to the end.” he turned to look at Will, who looked pensive.

“You really don’t think I should listen to Agent Crawford when he eventually tracks me down, do you?”

Hannibal shrugged, putting the bags into the back, pulling up the separator for the dogs to get in as well, before shutting it, “You cannot blame me for being apprehensive.” he sighed, “The

truth is, I have no idea what choice we should make."

"… You think we should just roll with whatever comes?"

"If you must put it so simply."

Will chuckled at the slightly affronted tone, getting into the driver's seat, turning to make sure that his children were buckled in and that the dogs were all lying down, before starting the engine and setting off.

They weren't long into the drive, before Hannibal was suddenly straightening up and twisting around.

"I sincerely hope I didn't just hear you teaching your brother curse words."

One look of Mischa's face said it all.

"It was just to keep his mind off the drive."

"You can do that without teaching him the f-word."

"English curses?" Will frowned, "I would have least thought you'd teach him Lithuanian ones, or French ones, they at least sound classy."

He kept his eyes on the road, feeling his omega's gaze boring hole in the side of his face.

"You are very lucky I love you." Hannibal sighed.

“Love you too darlin’”

Hannibal shifted in his seat and Will resisted the urge to smirk in victory.

The southern charm never failed.

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“Will Graham, repairman.” Jack made a note of the address, “Perfect.”

Chapter 3

On Monday morning, it was no surprise to Will when he saw the unfamiliar car pulling up outside the repair shop.

He'd seen the car loitering outside their Baltimore home that morning, leading him to instruct his family to leave out the back.

He didn't know who it was at that moment, but he was not about to put his omega and children in danger.

But now, as he watched the suited man emerge from the car, he knew exactly who this was.

"There you go Sir." He looked away from the approaching man, returning the boat keys to his customer, "No more rattling, and I replaced the fans as well, they were looking a little worn out."

"You're a miracle worker." The older man was one of his return customers, giving Will a warm smile, "How are your family by the way, I think it was your daughter who I met last time?"

"Coming into her teen years." They exchanged a knowing look as Mister Harris shook his head.

"Say no more, I remember it with my own children. Good luck!"

"I'll need all the luck I can get, thank you Mister Harris."

Mister Harris left, just as Agent Crawford entered.

The man was eager.

He saw Will as his key.

The key to the box that held so many murderers, that kept them safe from the clutches of the FBI.

“Mister Graham.” The Alpha confidently strode over to the desk, and held out his hand, which Will reluctantly shook, “Agent Crawford, I run the Behavioural Science unit of the Baltimore FBI.”

“Hm.”

If Jack was bothered by the lacklustre reply, he didn’t show it. “I think I met your omega, Doctor Lecter over the weekend? I assume he didn’t mention my visit?”

“He did.”

That made the smile falter slightly, “Ah… I had some trouble getting a hold of you? Perhaps a bad connection or- “

“- No.” Will sighed, “We bought that house so that we could have some peace on the weekends. With this store and Hannibal’s patients, it’s hard to find some time for us.” He looked up and fought not to smirk.

This Alpha was having some issues with his own mate.

Working long hours, the pair of them.

The romance just wasn't there anymore.

Such a shame.

"We don't answer the phone over the weekend, unless our personal numbers are being called." Will shrugged, "Emergencies and all that."

"Emergencies?" Jack glanced around the largish room, "I can't imagine you have many emergencies out here?"

"You'd be surprised." Will turned away from Jack, "Mostly they're for Hannibal though."

"Hm… I'm impressed you let him keep practicing."

Will stopped, "Why would I stop him?"

There was a moment of silence, before Jack cleared his throat, sensing that he was heading down the wrong path. "You were offered a teaching post at Quantico but declined it."

"I find it difficult to be… social. And my 'non-Alphaness' made people uncomfortable."

"And running a store is somehow less social than talking at classroom full of students?"

"I prefer it." Turning back to Jack, Will frowned, "Did Alana tell you all this?"

"I enquired about you, and she answered a few questions…. She didn't realise you'd gotten married and mated though, especially to the man who was her mentor."

“Flattering.” He could heart his heart beating in his chest, eyes flickering over to the wrench on his desk.

It would be so easy to wipe that smug smile from the other’s Alpha’s face.

“I didn’t mean anything by it.” Jack’s voice was casual, “Statistics aren’t exactly in favour of Alphas on the spectrum after all.”

“Well, I always liked being an outlier.”

So, so easy.

“Yes…” He continued, “…I’m probably closer to Asperger’s and Autism than Narcissism and Sociopathy.”

“But you can empathise with Narcissists and Sociopaths?”

Oh, how little the man knew.

“I can empathise with anyone, it’s less about a personality disorder than an overactive imagination.”

Jack leaned over the counter, “Can I… borrow your imagination?”

For a moment, the pair did nothing but stare at each other before Will sighed. “Wait outside… I need to close up.”

Hannibal would be in between patients right now.

They didn't keep secrets from one another.

…….

"In-tell- "

Hannibal paused, smiling softly at the pause.

Would Mikel figure out It was an I?

Will may believe that words such as Intelligence were too long for the four-year-old, but Hannibal had always believed it was easier to push a child to realise their full potential, than it was an adult.

Of course, his Sweet William had not needed much pushing.

Hearing the phone ringing on his table, he quickly answered it with a fond smile, "Will, what a pleasant surprise."

//Just a heads up… \\ Will sighed, //… Agent Crawford is here. \\

"Ah." Hannibal looked up at his library, seeing that Mikel was peering curiously through the banister, "Are you sure you want to go through with this? Letting Jack pull you into the darkness like this?"

//Because you're the only person allowed to do that? \\

“Precisely.” Hannibal chuckled fondly, “Do let me know if you’re going to be late home, yes?”

//Jack is not keeping me from you for hours on end. \\ There was a slight Alpha snarl in Will’s voice that forced Hannibal to take a deep breath, not wanting to flood the room with pheromones less than 30 minutes before his next patient, //I won’t let him. \\

“Nice to hear.” It really was, “I will send Mischa a message that I will be picking her up from school today. That should give you and Jack plenty of time together.”

//Yippee. \\ Will sighed, //I’ll let you know how it goes, okay? \\

“I would expect nothing more.”

The phone call ended, as Hannibal turned his attention up to Mikel. “Back to work mano mažasis. A few more words, then you can have some free time, agreeable?”

“Mmm.”

“That’s my good boy.”

……

Jack had been waiting for five minutes before Will finally emerged from the shop, locking it up behind him.

“Eight girls abducted from eight different Minnesota College Campuses. All in the last eight months.”

Will paused, slowly putting his key in his pocket, “You don’t waste any time, do you.” He sighed, “I thought there were seven.”

Hannibal had been interested in the case.

He was always interested in new, possible serial killer cases.

Wasn’t fond of the competition.

“There were… I found about the eighth as I was driving to your shop.”

“Abductions… no bodies then?”

“No bodies, nothing that even comes out of bodies. Nothing.”

Jack was sounding tense, as the cogs in Will’s brains already started to turn.

No bodies.

Either these girls were still alive and being held captive somewhere.

Or every single part of their bodies was being… dealt with in some way that meant it was untraceable to law enforcement.

He had a pretty good idea about that, but there was no need to bring it up just yet.

Let’s see if the Head of the BAU could figure it out for himself.

……..

There was no way their man was keeping all these girls captive, which left the other option.

His eyes scanned over the photos. “They’re all very… mall of America, aren’t they?”

Same hair colour.

Same eye colour.

Around the same height and weight.

He had a target in mind. These girls were all just… distractions.

Moving away from the board, he barely heard Jack yammering on, pulling out his phone and staring at his wallpaper for a moment, his eyes lingering on Mischa.

She was younger than these girls. Hair a dirty blond like her Motina’s and Will’s blue/green eyes.

She didn’t match the profile.

She would be fine.

She would be fine.

“I want you closer to this.”

Now that, Will definitely heard, turning to Jack and shaking his head almost immediately. He should have listened to Hannibal.

He had a bad feeling about this case.

“No, no, no, you’ve got Heimlich in Harvard and Alana in Georgetown. They do exactly the same thing I do.”

“That’s not exactly true, is it?” Jack frowned, “You have a very specific way of thinking about things.”

“… Is the FBI still gossiping about that?”

Silence.

Picking up his bag, Will sighed, “All anyone seems interested in, is how I tick. That’s why I decided against taking the teaching post, because I couldn’t spend my life feeling like an ant under a magnifying glass. Slowly burning until there was nothing left of me but an empty husk.”

“… Your omega is a psychiatrist. Doctor Bloom often reminds me that sometimes it’s difficult to… switch off the urge to profile people.”

Will’s fists tightened on the strap of his bag, “What Hannibal and I have… you couldn’t even begin to comprehend.” He moved towards the door, “The evidence explains the crime and you have one of the best forensics departments in the country.”

“We don’t know where to start! That’s why we need you!”

Were Will a lesser Alpha, he might have felt intimidated by the anger pheromones that Jack was exuding.

But he wasn’t.

And this was just laughable.

“That… may require me to be sociable.” He muttered, zipping up his ‘person suit’ and playing along.

Maybe this could be interesting.

Chapter 4

“Mikel? Mikel?”

Hannibal chuckled at Mischa’s ever-growing frustration. He was tempted to point out she was just as good at hide and seek when she was her brother’s age.

“Where the hell- “

“- Language!”

“Sorry Motina!”

The children went back to their game, as Hannibal continued with making their evening meal. Will had called earlier, apologising that he was going to be late home, so Hannibal was determined to make a nice meal for him.

Roasted leg with rosemary and lavender.

It was a little more rustic than a lot of the dishes he made, but he knew that his Alpha would appreciate that.

“Winston!” Mischa was trying a different tactic, “Winston, find Mikel! Go on!”

It was cheating, but it was a good strategy.

“How did you get up there?!”

There was genuine panic in Mischa's voice, prompting Hannibal to abandon the potatoes for a moment, rushing towards the source of the cry to the extensive downstairs study. Mischa was standing in front of their tallest bookshelf, the dogs all crowding around her feet as she stared up.

Hannibal followed her gaze, only to feel his heart sink to his stomach.

"Mikel!"

Mikel was right on top of the shelf, looking down at them all and looking a little bemused.

"Did I win?"

Hannibal was about to tell him exactly what he 'won' when he heard the door, and Will's tired voice calling out for them.

Followed by a sharp yipping noise.

Reaching up and plucking Mikel from the top of the shelf, giving him a disapproving look, he rushed to meet his Alpha in the foyer, eyes instantly landing on the small bundle in Will's arms.

"No." He stated sharply, "Absolutely not."

"He'd been abandoned on the side of the road!" Will protested, voice still tired, even as he forced himself to smile "I couldn't just leave him there. Besides, he's just a puppy."

"Puppies grow, as you are more than aware of."

“… Have I mentioned how much I love you?”

“Eight.” Hannibal hissed, “Eight dogs in the house and this one isn’t trained.”

“Training we can work on!” Will held the puppy up a little higher, “I think it’s a Lithuanian Hound you know, this could be considered fate.”

“William.”

Even as he gave Will a stern look though, Hannibal knew that he’d lost this battle.

When it came to the dogs, he always lost those battles.

……

“She’d been put back in her bed.” Will whispered that night, lying on the sofa, Hannibal practically curled up on top of him. They were all sated by the meal, with Mischa going to her room to talk with her friends, and Mikel playing with their new dog, who they’d affectionally called Cerberus, “It was… an act of remorse.”

“Why? Hannibal mused, “If your suspicions about what he does with the bodies is correct, then surely we must assume that there was something wrong with the meat?”

“I’m hoping the forensics will figure out what the problem is.” Will then smirked, “And then maybe, I’ll drop the hint.” He pulled Hannibal a little closer, pressing a kiss to his hair that Will had been running his fingers through for the past five minutes, “Speaking of meat, dinner was stunning tonight.”

“Hmm, you certainly sang it’s praises at the table.”

“Only because you flush oh so prettily when I do.” Will chuckled, “Let’s get Mikel into bed, okay?”

“Hm.” They straightened up, only for a sudden thought to occur to Hannibal, “Mikel was on top of the right window-side bookshelf today. I don’t suppose you happen to know where he got the idea to climb up there from?”

“… Nope.”

Silence.

“I might have pointed out that you push your books all the way to the back of the shelf and that they’re sturdy enough to take his weight.”

“I should make you sleep on the sofa.”

“But you won’t.”

Hannibal hated it when Will was right sometimes.

……

Mikel was fast asleep.

The dogs were sleeping downstairs (with Cerberus kept separate until he could be taken to the vet).

Mischa was in front of him… blood soaking through those flannel pyjamas she insisted on buying, that made Hannibal groan when he first saw them. Eyes closed in sleep, she looked

like a fallen angel, hair flowing all around her as her body rose up from the bed.

Will woke with a sharp gasp, feeling his stomach churning as he went to get out of bed, heart pounding in his chest.

“Will?”

He turned, unable to stop himself from smiling at the sleep-confused look on his omega’s face, hair sticking up in all directions.

He was the only one who could see Hannibal like this.

“Go back to sleep.” He whispered, leaning over and pressing a gentle kiss to his husband’s lips, “I just need to check on something.”

Hannibal mumbled something in his native tongue, rolling over onto Will’s side of the bed and burying his face into the pillow.

Heading out of the room, Will headed straight for his daughter’s room, slowly pushing open the door, smiling softly at the sight of her sprawled out on top of her covers, a book on the floor having been dropped from her hands at some point.

No blood.

No death.

Just peace and family.

Moving closer, he grabbed the comforter from the chair by the window, gently laying it over her, smoothing her hair away from her face and kissing her on the forehead, before leaving the roof.

Upon entering the master bedroom, he winced at the sight of Hannibal sitting up, back against the headboard as he gave Will a concerned look.

“Nightmares already?” Hannibal frowned, “I- “

“- I know.” Will interrupted roughly, moving onto the bed, pulling Hannibal until he was horizontal again and practically lying on top of his omega, pinning him to the bed.

It was an odd Alpha instinct, to want to protect their mate so completely, to stop any other Alpha from getting close that they risked suffocating their mate in the process. Wriggling he managed to get in between Hannibal’s legs, grinding down slightly as Hannibal moaned.

The moan only get louder when Will nosed at the mating mark, tongue tracing over the teeth marks.

“Get on with it!” His omega growled, raising his hips so that Will could remove his underwear, “Come on!”

And so, Will did, his nightmare pushed to the furthest recesses of his mind.

…….

The sun was just starting to rise when Will next woke up, looking over at his omega, the smell of what they’d done still in the air. Hannibal was lying on his front, pretty much in the exact position they’d finished in.

Bite marks lined his shoulders and back. There was a particularly vicious one on Hannibal's calf, from where Will had hoisted Hannibal's legs up over his shoulder.

There was evidence all over Hannibal's body, which was precisely how Will liked it.

Leaning over, he kissed one of the more brutal-looking bites, hand moving further down… only for there to be a knocking on the door.

"Motina?" Mikel called out, "Papa?"

Will groaned, hearing Hannibal chuckling beside.

"Duty calls."

"Duty needs to learn to sleep in past seven."

Hannibal sat up, stretching out his arms, gasping softly as their events from the night made itself known in the form of aches and pains. He gave Will a sly look, appreciating said aches, before getting to his feet, pulling on some pants and a dressing gown.

"I'll get breakfast started."

"Love you mon cher."

"And I love you mano širdis."

Chapter 5

Will let his thoughts wander as he washed his hands, eyes locking onto the mark he could see on his neck in his reflection.

'Just returning the favour' Hannibal had whispered before he left, a little earlier than usual, to take Cerberus to the vet before his first patient.

It was vicious and ached to the touch.

Will loved it.

He didn't even see Jack entering until the man's angry voice suddenly echoed through the bathroom.

"What are you doing here?"

"… I enjoy the smell of urinal pee."

"Yeah, yeah, we need to talk." After bellowing at another agent for him to use the ladies room, Jack turned back to Will frowning at the sight of the bite mark on his lower neck, "You let him mark you like that?"

"Trust me, this is a case of him giving as good as he got." Will forced himself to ignore the note of disgust in the other Alpha's voice, "You wanted to talk?"

"Do you respect my judgement Will?"

“Your judgement? Yes.”

He doubted Jack heard the unspoken words in that sentence, not with how worked up he was.

“Good, because we stand a better chance of catching this guy with you in the saddle!”

“I know.” Will shrugged, “But this isn’t your typical psychopath. He’d not insensitive, he’s not shallow.”

He wasn’t Hannibal or Will… but he was definitely something.

“You know something about him, otherwise last night, you wouldn’t have said that this was an apology. So, what it he apologising for?”

“… He couldn’t honour her, so he feels bad.”

“That goes against every description of a psychopath!”

“I know!”

“THEN WHAT KIND OF CRAZY IS HE?!”

Will forced himself to grip the sink behind him, knowing that if he didn’t he would rip out Jack’s vocal chords with his bare hands.

Use your Alpha voice on me then.

“He couldn’t show her he loved her, so he put her corpse back… whatever kind of crazy that is!”

“You think he loves them?”

“He loves one of though, and so by association, he has some form of love for the others!”

“There was no semen, no saliva. All of these girls were betas and omegas, but there was no sign of any sexual assault. Elise Nichols died a- “

“-He wouldn’t disrespect them like that!” Will snapped, “He wouldn’t do that to them, that’s not the kind of love that he has for them! He kills them quickly and with mercy!”

“A sensitive psychopath… risks getting caught to tuck Elise Nichols back into bed.”

Images of him covering his daughter with her comforter last night flashed through Will’s head.

“He’s going to take another girl soon…” He whispered, “… but he knows that he’ll be caught, one or the other.” He shook his head, “I need to get back to my shop. Call me if there’s anything else you need from me.”

“Will- “

“- Please.” Will hissed, “I have a life outside of this building, that I need to get back to.”

And then he was gone.

…….

“He’s not what who I expected him to be.” Jack confessed as he and Alana walked down the path, “But then again, they say marriage changes a person.”

“Will has always been like that.” Alana sighed, “Which tells me that he’s been married and mated longer than we think.”

“…. He trusts you.”

“Clearly he doesn’t” Alana sighed, “Otherwise I would have known about him and Hannibal sooner.”

He ignored the sideways glance Jack gave her, as he cleared his throat, “You don’t treat him like a patient. I’m sure he appreciates that.”

“I’ve never spent enough time with him to start seeing him as a patient…. And I’ve certainly never been in a room alone with him.”

“Why not?”

How could she explain it?

How could she explain the uneasy feeling she had around him, thinking that it was just an unmated beta being in a room with an unmated Alpha, until she learnt about his empathy disorder.

And then she realised there were just some things she wanted to keep to herself.

“You’ve already asked me to do a survey on him, and I said no.” She dodged the question.

“Well, we can’t ask Doctor Lecter, he’s married to him!” Jack groaned, “We need someone! Chilton, maybe?”

“Will hates him.”

“Will hates all psychiatrists, except for two, and he’s married to one of them.” Jack sighed, “And you won’t be in a room with him because of… professional curiosity?”

Again, Alana ignored the question behind those words. “Normally I wouldn’t broach this… but what do you think one of Will’s main drives is?”

Jack thought about for a moment, “From what I've seen... fear. He deals with an extraordinary amount of fear, probably because of his imagination.”

“It’s the price of imagination.”

“... I wouldn’t put him out there if I didn’t think he could handle it. He might not be your typical Alpha, but’s still an Alpha.”

“Not all Alpha’s are suited towards this sort of work.” Alana sighed, “I don’t think you should put him out there... but not because I think he can’t handle it.”

“Then why?”

“Because-because I have a bad feeling about all this. Like there’s something going on behind the scenes that we don’t know about yet.”

….....

‘No fingerprints on her skin, apart from a handprint on her neck. Nothing under the nails except her own skin. The piece of metal is all we have.’

Will couldn’t believe Jack was having the forensics team call him at work, rolling his eyes as Mischa entered the shop, his daughter frowning at the look on her Papa’s face.

‘Nothing to worry about’ he mouthed to her, before interjecting into Price’s report, “Look at plumbers, metal workers, professions like that.” He looked back up at Mischa mouthing, ‘Get started on your homework’ at her, which she rolled her eyes at, almost flouncing past him.

When did she start flouncing?

How had he missed that?

The forensics team were talking about the antler velvet found in the obvious gore wounds but getting nowhere.

“She was mounted.” Will kept his voice low, not wanting to alert Mischa in the other room. Both for the fact that she was a little young to be hearing about brutal murders, and because she adored hearing about brutal murders, “She might have been bled…. But there was something wrong with the meat.”

Silence.

“You said that the liver was removed and then put back in? That was the reason he put her back in her bed… he couldn’t honour every part of her.”

“She-she has liver cancer, but you can’t seriously be suggesting that he’s- “

“- eating them?” Will interrupted, glad that this conversation wasn’t happening in person, so that they couldn't see the small smile on his face, “Yes, I am. Explains the lack of bodies as well, right?”

A contemplative silence this time.

Hook.

Line.

And sinker.

Chapter 6

Hannibal resisted the urge to sneer as Franklyn sobbed bitterly, snorting into a tissue, and depositing it blindly on the glass table next to him... despite the bin that was right there.

Every so often, he could hear Mikel turning the page in his colouring book, the felt tip scratching across the paper. Cerberus had worn himself after dinner and was fast asleep in the corner of the room.

The pup (a Lithuanian Hound as Will correctly supposed) was perfectly healthy aside for being a little underweight, and with Mikel having bonded with it so quickly, he knew there was no point in trying to persuade Will to get rid of it now.

“I-I hate being this neurotic!” The beta sobbed out, turning Hannibal’s attention away from his son and back to his patient.

“If you weren’t neurotic Franklyn, you’d be something much worse.” He fought not to sound weary. “Our brain is designed to experience anxiety in short bursts, not the prolonged duress your neurosis forces you to endure. It’s why you feel as though a lion was constantly following you, waiting to devour you.”

Another round of sobbing.

“Franklyn… you have to persuade yourself that the lion is not in the room. When it is, you will know.” He glanced up at the clock, “That is the end of our session, but I want you to work on what we’ve talked about Franklyn, okay?”

“Y-Yes Doctor Lecter.”

Getting up, he went to show Franklyn out of the door, grateful that he had a break after this appointment to go over Mikel’s work. This was not meant to be however, as he opened the

door as saw Jack Crawford practically jump to his feet, a smile on his face that he probably thought was reassuring.

To Hannibal, it looked more like a grimace.

“I hate to be discourteous, but this is a private exit for my patients.” He kept his voice firm, but polite, “I would please ask you to take a seat in the waiting room.”

“I- “

“- please.”

Crawford looked a little taken aback as Hannibal turned to Franklyn, “I will see you at the same time next week Franklyn.”

Franklyn nodded frantically, beating a hasty retreat which made Hannibal sigh internally.

A strange Alpha, clearly law enforcement, suddenly showing up out of the blue… This was going to set Franklyn back weeks.

Shutting Crawford out, deciding to make the Alpha wait for a few minutes, Hannibal looked up at the library where Mikel was peering down at him.

“You have to be quiet now.... okay?”

“The loud man is back.”

“The loud man is back.” Hannibal confirmed, “So fingers on lips, okay?”

Mikel nodded frantically, placing his finger on his lips and sitting back, watching as Hannibal scanned the office, making sure that there was nothing incriminating around.

Of course, there wasn't.

He'd been very careful ever since that incident two years ago.

Satisfied that there was nothing, he headed back over to the door and opened it up, giving Crawford a welcoming smile, "Please. Come in." Jack entered, Hannibal 's eyes automatically flickering up to the library, where Mikel was watching curiously, "How can I help you today? If you were looking for Will again, I'm afraid he's not here."

"No, I know he's gone back to that little shop of his."

Hannibal's fists tightened, hating the derision and scorn in the Alpha's voice. As though running a highly profitable repair shop was something to scoff at.

Will was HIS Alpha.

He would never stand for someone treating him like that.

"This is a nice set-up." Jack mused, "Nicer than a lot of psychiatrist offices."

"… Thank you." Subconsciously assuming that Hannibal was living off of Will's money. Another tick against the other Alpha, "I had some savings, so I thought I would… splurge a little."

"Are you expecting another patient?"

“No… not for quite some time.” Hannibal smirked, “I’m all yours Agent Crawford.”

“Good… no secretary?”

“She was predisposed to romantic wills and followed her heart to the UK.”

Flirted with HIS husband every time he came to visit.

Unacceptable.

He enjoyed serving her to Will, and Will enjoyed his possessiveness.

“I was sorry to see her go.”

Hannibal watched as Jack moved around the room, eyes taking in everything, until they landed on the drawings on his desk.

“Incredible.” He whispered, “Are these yours?”

“Among the first…. This one was my boarding school when I lived in Paris as a boy.”

“Such attention to detail.” Jack’s voice was awed, and Hannibal scolded his inner omega for preening at the praise, reaching down for the scalpel.

“You learn very quickly that a scalpel cuts a finer point than a regular sharpener.” He sharpened the pencil as a demonstration, keeping it in his hands as Jack continued to paw through the drawings.

“Well, now I understand why your drawings earned you an internship at John Hopkins.”

Hannibal tensed further, turning slightly away from Jack, “I’m beginning to think you’re investigating me Agent Crawford.”

“Curiosity.” Jack chuckled, “Alana seemed shocked that Will had settled down, so I felt inclined to learn a little bit more about you.”

“… I would have been happy to have you for dinner if you wanted to know more.” Hannibal carefully placed the scalpel back down, “I would have invited Alana to. I was very fond of her during her internship.”

“Hmm, she showed me your paper as well. Evolutionary- Evolutionary Origins of Social Exclusion?”

“Yes.”

“Impressive work. It’s rare that omegian work is published, so you must have been very proud.”

“… I was. As was Will.”

Jack paused, glancing back at Hannibal, “You’ve been together for that long then?”

“Will and I met when I first came to America… a chance meeting really, one that I will never forget.” Hannibal chuckled, “Although, we were not properly mated until around fifteen years ago.”

“So long.” There was a hint of melancholy in Jack’s voice.

Marriage of his own not going so well?

Jack had turned his attention back to the drawings, clearly uncomfortable with the direction this conversation had gone, moving the paper to one side until he suddenly froze.

“Agent Crawford?”

“I didn’t know you also worked with children.” Jack pulled a familiar drawing out from the bottom of the pile. One of Mikel’s from a couple of weeks ago, of their most recent summer vacation to Louisiana.

Mikel had especially loved drawing the alligator eating someone.

“I don’t.”

Jack froze, instantly coming to the correct realisation, “You… and Will- “

“- We have been together for fifteen years.”

As if on cue, there was a sneeze from up above, with Jack moving into the centre of the room and looking up immediately, seeing Mikel staring down at him.

“Sorry Motina.” Mikel whispered, “Didn’t mean to.”

“Just make sure you blow your nose.”

Jack was still staring.

“Agent Crawford, meet Mikel, mine and Will’s youngest.”

“Youngest implies… more.”

“Hmm, we have a teenage daughter as well.” Hannibal was seriously enjoying this, “I’m surprised your check on me didn’t bring them up, it is fairly public knowledge.”

Well… perhaps it was a little less public than most births.

“Right.” Jack tore his eyes away from Mikel, “I’m sorry to disturb you. I should get back to the office.”

“Of course.” He watched as Jack beat a hasty retreat, hearing Mikel giggling.

“He was weird.”

“Indeed, he was.” Picking up the phone, Hannibal called Will, “William… an interesting development has occurred.”

Chapter 7

“Wait, wait, wait!” Will couldn’t breathe for laughing, “I can just see the look on his face.”

Hannibal chuckled, taking another bite of their evening meal, brought to them by the courtesy of Will (Citrus-Cured Trout with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette), “He did appear to be very shocked by the thought of us having children, and how long we’ve been together.”

“I feel like I should be offended by the fact that no-one seems to think I’m capable of holding down a long-term relationship.”

“Hmm, I think we should possibly be prepared for Agent Crawford’s increased presence in our lives.” Hannibal sighed, shooting a quick glance at Mischa and Mikel, “There’s no need to scrape your forks along the plate you two.”

“Sorry.” “Sorry Motina.”

“Increased presence?” There was a soft smile on Will’s face, always finding the way Hannibal spoke endearing, “Why do you say that?”

“He may… wish to know if our children inherited your gift.”

Will paused, fork halfway to his mouth, “Why would it matter to him?” He hissed, “They’re too young for him to use. Nobody in the FBI would ever sanction using children to help solve those sorts of crimes.”

“But it might be easy to influence them to work for the FBI in the future.”

Will rolled his eyes, turning to the two children, who were staring at him. “Don’t join the FBI.” He ordered, “Got it?”

“Got it.” “Yes Papa.”

“It’s bad enough I’m being dragged into this mess.” Will muttered, “If Jack even thinks about pulling them into it, I’ll kill him.”

“We can make it a date.”

The pair clinked their glasses together, already imagining that moment in the future. Jack’s blood spilling over their hands as the man desperately gasped out his final breath.

“Mischa…” Will then had a terrible idea, “… How are your grades?”

“Ummm, near perfect?”

“You can have a day off tomorrow then, can’t you?” Will then turned to Hannibal “And you don’t tend to have many patients on a Friday.”

“I don’t.” Hannibal confirmed, “In fact, tomorrow is a clear day. Mrs Holland cancelled her morning therapy sessions for the foreseeable future.” He narrowed his eyes at his husband, “What are you planning William?”

“A family outing.” Will beamed, “I’ll bring Mischa with me to the FBI Headquarters in the morning, and then later, after you’ve finished filing your paperwork for the week, you and Mikel can come later on.”

“... That would un-nerve quite a few people.”

“Exactly.”

Hannibal couldn't stop the smirk from appearing on his face, "You wicked, wicked boy."

"I try."

….....

"Will!"

Will paused in the middle of the hallway, Mischa stopping right next to him as Alana rushed over. The beta's eyes were wide as she glanced between the pair of them. Dressed in a dark, open flannel shirt, a tie-dye t-shirt, harem pants and converse, Mischa looked every inch Will's child, her hair acting as a shield as Alana moved closer.

"Alana." Will smiled as warmly as he could, "This is my daughter, Mischa."

"Mischa." Alana repeated the name softly, "A beautiful name."

"Thank you." Mischa shuffled from side to side, playing the part of shy teenager perfectly.

"Are you… going to see Jack?"

Will shrugged, "He called me in. Wanted to speak to me again, and Mischa has a day off."

"And Hannibal…"

"… Is a little busy at the moment. But he'll be by later."

Somehow, Alana didn't look cheered up by the thought.

Shame.

……

"We've had twelve dozen confessions, none of them containing any details." Jack was still staring at Mischa, making even her squirm a little.

Will had that eye-gouging fantasy again.

"Have you ever considered joining the FBI… Mischa?" Jack changed the conversation abruptly, smiling warmly at her, only for it to fall from his face when she shook her head, "Oh, do you have a career path in mind, or- "

"- Not really." Mischa shrugged, "Something to do with art maybe, I don't know."

"You've got a few more years to think about it." Will reassured her, "Don't mention the possibility of college to your Motina just yet, I think he might have a heart attack at the…" He trailed off.

Oh… that would explain everything.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

…….

“’M tired Motina.” Mikel whined.

“You’ve only just woken up from your nap.” Hannibal chuckled, climbing out of the Bentley and moving round to unbuckle Mikel from his car seat, “Give your body a chance to wake up, hmmm?”

Mikel just let out another whine, which Hannibal was powerless to resist, lifting him into his arms and heading into the building so they could get their visitor badges.

“How about we play a little game, hmm?” He bounced the four-year-old up and down a little, hoping that would perk him up a little, “Let’s see if you can find Papa and Mischa!”

“Like a tracking dog?”

“… Yes, like a tracking dog.” He didn’t like the comparison, but it was enough to wake Mikel up as he placed his son back on his feet and watched him dart off, narrowly avoiding running into a crowd of students that were emerging from their classroom.

“Apologies.” Hannibal nodded at them as they passed, trying not to chuckle when several of them blushed.

It was always gratifying to know that two children and a slightly advanced age still garnered such a reaction.

“I don’t suppose someone knows the way to Agent Crawford’s office.”

He received eager answers, thanked them and was on his way, carefully dropping hints to Mikel as he raced through the corridors.

“How about we try this room?”

Mikel nodded, knocking on the door as a familiar voice called out “Come in.”

Hannibal opened the door, letting Mikel go in first as the four-year-old bounced up and down, “Found them! Found them!”

“Inside voices mano mažasis.” Hannibal knew it was a lost cause, as Will immediately turned to lift Mikel into his arms, his hand pushing dark curls away from his eyes.

“Did you track us down?” Will’s voice was a little shaky, which made Hannibal frown, moving over to stand by his daughter and placing a hand on her shoulder, noticing how tense she was as well.

“I did! I did!” Mikel didn’t notice any of the tension, beaming up at Will before realising that there were other people in the room and losing all confidence he had, burying his face into Will’s chest.

“Oh.” Alana’s voice was soft, and a little bit awed, “And who is this?”

“This is Mikel, our youngest.” Will chuckled when Mikel tried to bury his face further, “He’s a little shy.”

“I can see that.”

Mikel glanced up briefly at her words, only to quickly re-bury his face when a sharp gasp broke from her throat.

“Oh.”

Hannibal forced himself not to react, “Yes Doctor Bloom, Mikel has rather stunning eyes don’t you think?”

He had been so happy when Mischa’s eyes reflected Will’s, the same storminess held within.

For a time, it had seemed the same thing was going to occur with Mikel…. And they were half right.

The right eye was that gorgeous blue.

The left was the same shade of maroon as his Motina’s, glimmering red every so often in the right light.

What had Alana seen in that brief glance, Hannibal couldn’t help but wonder.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

So.. I fell into a Price/Zeller hole as well.

“Yes, Doctor Bloom, Mikel has rather stunning eyes don’t you think?”

“Y-Yes, of course.” To her credit, Alana looked horrified at her own response, “I’m sorry Michael- “

“- Mikel- “

“… Mikel. I didn’t mean to upset you.”

Mikel removed his face from Will’s chest, but still didn’t look up at her, muttering out a quick, “It’s okay” before snuggling close.

There was an awkward silence for a few moments, before Hannibal cleared his throat, “We’re sorry to interrupt, but it’s coming close to the time where we need to start heading out to Wolf Trap for the weekend.”

“We’re in the middle of an investigation!”

Will sighed at the protest, “I am only here as a consultant Jack. Technically, I shouldn’t be allowed to be in the field, but you dragged me to the Nichol’s house anyway. If you need anything, you can call.”

“The last time I tried to call you, you had ‘connection issues.” Jack scowled, “Remember?”

“Then I’ll give you my mobile number!” And not answer it, Will added silently.

“Or...” Alana gently interjected, “... You could go to Minnesota as a family? Aren’t Price and Zeller having trouble finding someone to look after their own little boy for the weekend? He’s around Mikel’s age.”

Hannibal held back his groan when Mikel perked up a little.

That was one of the only downsides to home-schooling his son… he didn’t have many friends, so of course, Mikel was going to look excited at the prospect.

“And Hannibal… Doctor Lecter has experience with profiling and forensic psychology.” Alana continued, “Maybe he could offer some help as well?”

Hannibal was grateful that Alana had spoken up about the idea. He had a feeling if Jack had spoken up in favour of it, the reference to omega’s being good child-minders would have come up.

He looked over at his husband, who was staring back, their eyes locking gazes.

‘Why do you think?’

‘What do YOU think?’

The eye contact lasted less than a second, but the decision was made, with Will clearing his throat, “Before you go dragging us off here, there and everywhere, maybe Mikel should meet Brian and Jimmy’s son first? If they don’t get along, then subjecting them to a weekend of each other won’t help.”

“I’ll call them up.” Jack leapt on the chance, knowing that this was probably the only way he was getting Will for the weekend.

“Zeller. Price. Get up here and bring the kid.” Jack frowned at whatever was said, “Sorry… bring Fleming…fine, you can bring Katz as well.”

He hung up as Hannibal raised an eyebrow, “Fleming… an unusual name. Not named for Ian Fleming I assume?”

“Named after Sir Alexander Fleming.” Jack sighed, “Why they couldn’t call the kid, Alexander, I don’t know.”

Less than two minutes later, there was a knock on the door and Price poked his head in.

“Oh!” He beamed, “We were wondering what was going on.”

Another four-year-old wriggled into the room, racing over to Will and therefore Mikel immediately.

“Hi!” The child, Fleming, beamed at Mikel who was looking a little star-struck, “I’m Fleming, who are you?!”

“M-Mikel.”

“Hi Mikel! You’re pretty!”

Oh god.

Hannibal could see hell unfolding in front of him.

…….

“It’s a little childhood crush.” Will chuckled as they flew out to Minnesota, “It was bound to happen sooner or later.”

Hannibal was not sulking at his husbands’ words.

Or his daughter’s sly smirk, which she tried to hide by looking out of the window.

Or the fact that his son was sat on his lap and not paying the slightest bit of attention to him, leaning over into the aisle as Fleming sat on Price’s lap and babbled some nonsense about his creaking bedroom and his attempts to sneak out at night to watch the bats.

“Thank you for this.”

Hannibal looked up at Price, who was giving him an apologetic look.

“Fleming… finds it hard getting on with other kids.” The forensic scientist whispered, “It’ll be good that he has someone this weekend.”

How often had he himself struggled with friends? Not that he ever needed any before meeting Will.

And really, there were worse children for Mikel to get involved with.

“This’ll be good for Mikel too.” Hannibal returned the warm smile, “This promises to be an… interesting weekend.”

Price smiled, bouncing Fleming up and down a couple of times to make him giggle.

Mollified by the beta's words, Hannibal turned his thoughts to what they might possibly find in Minnesota.

It might be nice to leave Jack… a little gift.

It had been so long since Will had seen his work after all.

……

Oh, this was perfection.

Will had never forgotten the darkness that drew him to Hannibal in the first place, but to see it displayed like this, as though they were at the beginning of their courting period again… it sent an eager shiver down Will's spine.

With Hannibal staying behind to keep an eye on the children, taking them out for the day (and now Will understood what that wicked smirk was all about), everyone was gathered around the corpse of the young woman, impaled on the stag antlers, Price and Zeller keeping the birds away.

"The stag head was reported stolen about a mile from here."

Will fought not to smirk.

He hated flying, so on the first night after flying anywhere, he usually slept like a rock. His omega knew this.

“Minnesota Homicide have already made a statement. They’re calling him the ‘Minnesota Strike’.”

“… A shrike’s a bird, isn’t it?”

Price nodded, getting to his feet, “It’s a perching bird; impales mice and small lizards on thorny branches or barbed wire. Rips the organs right out of their bodies! Puts them in a little birdy pantry and eats them later.”

Oh god they had to stop, or Will was going to pull something in his effort not to laugh.

“He wanted her found this way.” He managed to say, voice still serious, “He’s mocking her… mocking us.”

Mocking you lot.

“Where did all his love go?”

“No… whoever tucked Elise Nichol’s into bed, didn’t paint this picture.” Moving closer, Will realised that he did recognise the girl from the previous evening.

The rude one, from the diner.

“He took her lungs.” Zeller’s voice was weak and shaky, “Pretty sure she was alive when he took them.”

Was it wrong that Will was now thinking about dinner and whatever Hannibal was planning on making?

Protein scramble?

“Our cannibal loves women. He doesn’t want to hurt them; he wants to consume them…keep a part of them with him.”

“You think this is a copycat.”

Will played it off.

A copycat was too simplistic a term to describe his beloved.

“Elise Nichols was tucked into bed… this is a display. Field Kabuki.”

In his head, he was already coming up with the profile for the actual Shrike… two houses or a cabin somewhere… an antler room for the mounting.

Would Hannibal flambe the lungs?

Maybe not, they were in an unfamiliar kitchen after all, nice as the hotel was.

Shaking his head, he cleared his throat, “I had a realisation back in your office.” He stated to Jack, “When we were talking about Mischa and her future… when I implied that Hannibal wasn’t ready to hear about her going away to college.” He looked the other Alpha in the eyes, “The Shrike has a daughter, same age as these girls, same hair colour, same height, same weight, same everything! She’s probably an only child who’s going to college soon, and he’s not ready to let her go… she’s the golden ticket.”

“And this copycat?”

“An intelligent, sadistic psychopath will be difficult to catch.” He kept his voice monotone, not wanting to highlight the pride that he felt, “There’s no motive, no real evidence… they may never kill this way again.” He sighed, “We’re better off focusing on the Shrike.”

As Will turned to walk away, Jack called out after him.

“Where are you going?!”

“To spend time with my family. Like I actually wanted to do this weekend!”

NSFW Chapter!

Chapter Summary

Wow... that escalated

His victim had been just a victim of chance.

It wasn't her fault she practically fit the profile of the current serial killer they were hunting…. But it was her fault that she clearly hadn't been raised with manners.

Hannibal and his family had gone out to a diner when they arrived (on Mischa's request; Hannibal was more than willing to let her have the occasional non-homecooked meal, even if he did just order the vegetarian option), and the young woman had been leaving as they arrived.

She'd nearly knocked Mikel over in her hurry to leave, chatting on her phone and not slowing down in the slightest, not even apologising as she walked away from them.

What else was he supposed to do?

Will returned that evening, giving him a knowing look as the children milled all around them.

"Later." He whispered into Hannibal's ear, that one word sending shivers of anticipation down the older man's spine, before Will was pulling back and clearing his throat, mask firmly back in place, "So, what have you all been up to today?"

"There are some lovely National park around here." Hannibal answered, "So, we all had a lovely walk. Mischa taught the two boys a bit about the plants that we found and the animals, so they were entertained. We've rented Pinocchio if you wish to watch it with us?"

Hannibal knew full well Will had other plans.

“Let’s wait until Price and Zeller get back from the Minnesota offices.” Will reached out, pulling his omega closer, “I was thinking, you and I could go for a walk of our own?” He made a show of looking out of the window, “There’s some nice woods around here.”

Oh, and wasn’t that just Hannibal’s weakness.

Being chased in the woods.

“Can we call them here any sooner?”

……

“Hands on the tree and keep them there.”

Hannibal was still panting from the chase, doing as he was told immediately.

He could survive without this suit, he told himself as Will yanked his pants and underwear down to his ankles. Calloused hands tugged and nudged at his hips, until his legs were spread wide, showing off his ass.

“I saw your little present today.” Will whispered, “You know what that does to me. Seeing your work displayed like that, and in front of the FBI.” he groped at Hannibal’s ass, rumbling low in his chest at the breathy groans it pulled from the omega.

He didn’t need to look to know that Hannibal was already pre-prepared, knowing that nothing stirred William up more than displays such as that. Still, he thrusted two fingers inside,

making Hannibal whine shrilly, trying not to rub his head against the rough bark of the tree, knowing that he wouldn't be able to hide the scrapes.

At this rate, he'd come untouched.

It wasn't long before he felt the head of Will's cock pressing lightly against his gaping hole, before gently breaching him, working its way in inch by inch until Hannibal could feel Will's pants rubbing against the bare skin of his ass.

He then pulled back until just the head was inside, before slamming back in, making Hannibal's fingers dig into the rough bark in an attempt to prevent himself from reaching down and touching himself.

"I can't believe you took her lungs like that." Will whispered, "I hope you've got something nice planned with them."

"Ah-ah-of course I do!" Hannibal was a little offended that Will would ever even consider his cooking to be sub-par.

"Good." Will slid his hands around, getting a good grip where thighs met hips, the new angle shifting his angle so that he hit Hannibal's prostate with each stroke, picking up speed as Hannibal tightened around him. With one last thrust, he buried himself to the hilt and came, smirking in the knowledge that Hannibal would have to walk back with William's seed dripping down his thighs.

Hannibal couldn't contain the broken wail as he managed to come untouched, his seed stripping the bark in front of him, feeling Will pulling out, knowing that he was admiring his handiwork.

He panted as Will pulled up his pants for him, shaking hands trying to straighten out the rest of his clothing in the hope it didn't look too much like he'd just been taken out in the wild like this.

“Come on.” Will chuckled, “We’d better get back before Price and Zeller get suspicious.”

……

Price and Zeller had indeed given them a knowing look, but Hannibal decided the thrill of the weekend was worth a small amount of embarrassment.

With Price, Zeller, Katz and Fleming in their own rooms, Hannibal prepared breakfast.

Jack had been recalled back to Baltimore for a court case, leaving the five adults to continue the investigation on their own for a time.

“Mmm, protein scramble.” He felt Will wrap his arms around him from behind, “Mikel is going to be thrilled.”

“Good. I went through a lot of effort to get this you know.”

Will chuckled, pressing a kiss to his cheek before going to get Mischa and Mikel up.

“No word from Jack?”

“Apparently, he’s going to be held up in court today, so the adventure is all ours.”

“Perfect.” Will poked his head back into the tiny kitchen, “Fancy capturing a cannibal?”

“My dear Will, you already have.”

Will cackled in delight.

……

Mikel hummed happily as he ate his breakfast, not paying attention to the conversation going on around him.

“You want me to look after two four-year-olds all day?” Mischa whined.

“We want you to supervise them.” Hannibal corrected, “Fleming’s parents and Katz will be busy with the forensics for a few hours, whilst your Papa and I continue looking for the killer. I have rented a few Disney films for them to enjoy, so all you have to do, is make sure they don’t break anything, or hurt themselves.” He raised an eyebrow, “Can we trust you with that?”

“… Yeah.”

“That’s my darling.” Hannibal chuckled, “When we get back to Baltimore, I’m sure we can think of a suitable reward for you.”

Instantly, she perked up.

“I want to come on a hunt.”

Both Will and Hannibal froze.

“A proper hunt.”

“Are two four-year-olds really so much trouble?” Will muttered, clearing his throat, “Mischa, we talked about this.”

“Will you at least think about it? I’ll just sit in the car if you want!”

Hannibal held up a hand to stop her, “We’ll talk about it more when we go back to Baltimore, agreed?”

It was clear she was annoyed by this, but nodded anyway, turning her attention back to her food.

“I get to spend the day with Fleming again?” Mikel then piped up, “Can we go out walking again?”

“We’re having a quiet day today, okay?”

“Okay!”

Mikel was satisfied; Mischa was…well, she was happy for the moment.

Looking back, Hannibal didn’t understand how it all went so wrong.

Chapter 10

The woman at the worksite must have called Garrett Jacob Hobbs to inform him that the FBI were snooping around.

They pulled up, just as there was a loud BANG echoing through the area.

“Stay here.” Will ordered Hannibal, just as the front door was thrown open and a woman stumbled out, clutching at her throat as her fingers were stained bright red.

“Shit!”

She was dead before she hit the ground.

Will cursed. He didn’t have a gun on him, not really being a proper FBI agent, but he couldn’t let Garrett get away.

BANG.

Making his decision, he raced into the home, not knowing that Hannibal was following on behind. He entered the kitchen cautiously, finding the back door wide open… and Garratt Jacob Hobbs crumpled against the kitchen cabinets, a shotgun wound in his midsection that was slowly turning the floor a dull red with his blood.

He didn’t look alarmed by Will’s sudden appearance, instead smiling weakly up at him.

“Just… like… her old… man.” He whispered, “You… see?!”

And then he was gone, just as Hannibal entered the room.

“I told you to stay in the car.” Will sighed, looking around and quickly figuring out what was missing.

Where was the daughter?

……

The passenger side door of the strange car was wide open as she approached it.

An Alpha and an Omega from the smell.

They didn’t look like FBI, but the woman on the phone had indicated differently.

She searched through the dashboard, finding a calling card for a local motel.

Maybe she would find out more there.

…….

Mischa was having more fun than she thought she would.

They’d watched How To Train Your Dragon, and now she was throwing the four-year-olds onto the double bed as they pretended to fly.

“Again! Again!”

This was great weight training.

“One...two... THREE!”

Mikel landed heavily next to Fleming, the pair of them bouncing up and down a couple of times, giggling madly, which only made Mischa laugh as well.

Ad then she saw the girl walking past, a shotgun hanging from a strap that went around her chest.

“Mischa?”

She turned to the boys, who clearly hadn’t noticed anything, both of them eager for another go.

“One minute, okay?” She whispered, gesturing for them to go and sit on the bed, “Stay there.”

She opened the door and called out to the girl.

……..

As forensics swarmed the house, uniformed officers looking for the missing daughter, who was probably the one who pulled the trigger on her parents, Hannibal and Will made their way back to car to relieve Mischa of her babysitting duties.

“The dashboard is open.” Hannibal noticed immediately, tensing up, “I’m sure it was closed.”

“Was there anything important in there?”

“Not that I can recall, just a map and a card for the motel…” Hannibal’s voice was trailing off by the end, horror tinging his words, “… it had the address on it.”

Will immediately came to the same conclusion, the pair of them scrabbling to get into the car and speeding away.

This was Abigail’s home.

If she cut through the woods, instead of using the main road, she’d beat them to the motel in no time.

…….

The girl was probably a few years older than Mischa, looking a little alarmed at her sudden arrival.

“What are you hunting?” Mischa asked.

“… Deer.”

“There’s deer around here?”

The girl nodded, a small smile appearing on her face. “If you know where to look.”

…….

“Is that Mischa?” Hannibal was already unclipping his seat belt and opening the door, clearly intending to jump out of the car, still moving or not, “And- “

“- Shit, shit, shit!” Will slammed on the brakes, moving to get out as well, as Mischa turned to them in confusion.

“Papa? Motina?” They saw her mouth shape the words, but couldn’t hear them, too caught up in the sight of Abigail pulling something out of her inside pocket, moving closer to Mischa.

“MISCHA!”

It was too late.

Abigail’s hand moved across Mischa’s throat, quick as a flash, before she was off and running.

Mischa stood there for what seemed like an age, but was in reality, only a few seconds, before her knees crumpled out from underneath her.

“MISCHA!”

Hannibal got there first, one hand immediately clamping over the wound on his daughter’s neck. It wasn’t instantly fatal, but it was serious enough to make him frantic.

“Breathe, breathe, breathe!” He pleaded, “It’s okay, it’s okay!”

He could vaguely hear Will frantically speaking on the phone to what he hoped was the emergency ambulance service, but didn’t dare look over at him to check, keeping his eyes on Mischa’s in the hope that that simple eye contact would be enough to reassure her that everything was going to be alright.

He had seen the life fade from someone's eyes before, but he never wanted to see it fade from her eyes.

Not in his Mischa.

"Hold on." He whispered, hearing sirens in the distance, "Please hold on."

…….

Hannibal had gone with the ambulance, leaving Will at the motel, waiting for the Price/Zeller/Katz trio to arrive.

There was a patch in the grass that was still stained with his daughter's blood.

Abigail Hobbs was on the run… and it was his fault.

How could he have not seen that she was involved to the point where shooting her mother and father was perfectly acceptable to her.

He should have stopped the receptionist from making any calls.

There was so much he should have done.

"Will! Will!"

Slowly, he looked over at the forensic trio, who were racing towards him.

“Will, what happened?” Katz was the first to speak up, “Where are the children?”

Will gestured towards the motel room, where Fleming and Mikel were being unsuccessfully distracted by another Disney film.

“Are they okay? What happened?! Nobody would tell us anything!”

“Mischa, she- “Will couldn’t say the words, shaking his head.

“Mischa? What- “ It was then that Price saw the blood stain, “-Oh God.”

And that, was the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Will buried his face in his hands and allowed a few tears to shed.

Mischa would be fine.

Hannibal couldn’t lose another Mischa.

Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Bit of a filler chapter honestly :S

Mischa was stable.

She was also in a coma.

Will had lost count of the number of times, he'd entered her hospital room to find Hannibal asleep in the nearest chair, Mischa's hand in his own.

Mikel also spent the majority of his time in her room, playing quietly with his toys in the corner of his room. Every so often, he would look up at his sister, tears building up in his eyes, before he looked away again.

Will hated it.

And Abigail was still on the run.

His sleep was plagued with nightmares.

His daughter falling to the ground in slow motion, blood spurting in an artful arch, pooling on the ground until he felt like he was drowning in it, waking up in a cold sweat and finding that he had to change the sheets because of it.

Were he a member of the FBI, and had no responsibilities as a parent, he'd head down to the shooting range and release his frustrations there.

Instead, he found himself dragged out by the Forensic trio, with a very subdued Fleming with them.

“Is Mischa going to be okay?” Was the child’s first questions when he saw Will, “She was nice! She was helping us fly!

Thankfully, Price and Zeller didn’t seem to mind hearing about Mischa throwing the two boys onto the bed, but Will supposed that with everything else going on, that was a minor issue.

“She’ll be fine.” Katz spoke up, in the face of Will’s silence, “Nothing for you worry about, okay kid?”

Fleming was unconvinced, as Will’s phone buzzed in his pocket.

“Jack again?”

Will nodded, fists clenched as he fought remain calm, “This wouldn’t have happened if I hadn’t let Jack talk me into coming back like this.” He whispered, “It’s my fault… it’s my fault that I didn’t see that Abigail was involved, and it’s my fault that Mischa was hurt.”

“And you blame Jack for getting you involved.”

Will nodded, grateful when they didn’t say anything to dissuade him from these thoughts.

Price’s phone started to buzz then, leading to him giving Will an apologetic look before he pulled it out of his pocket and answered it.

The shouting could be heard immediately.

“Yes Sir…. Yes Sir…. Yes Sir…. I don’t think he wants to- Yes Sir, I’ll tell him.”

He hung up and turned to Will. “Long story short…they found the secondary space you were talking about…the log cabin? Jack wants you back on the case.”

Will pulled his phone and fired off a quick text to Jack, the language in it unrepeatable in polite conversation.

“My daughter is currently in a coma. My husband in on the verge of breaking down, and we have a four-year-old who shouldn’t be alone at this time, but kind of is, because we’re so worried about Mischa!” Will growled, “But no…. this is more important!”

“I mean- “ Katz winced when Will turned his glare on her, “- forget it.”

“… Were you going to try to appeal to my better nature?”

“No… obviously.”

……

//They’re running some more tests on her. \\ Hannibal sighed over the phone, //The prognosis is good, especially as the wound was not overly deep and her vocal chords were not damaged… she still hasn’t woken up though. We may be able to get her transferred to the Baltimore hospital soon. \\

“You’ve said a lot…” Will did not have the patience for this, “… but you’ve not actually told me whether or not I should help Jack.”

//I wasn’t aware I had such control over you. \\

“Bullshit. You love the control over me.” Will sighed wearily, “Just… speak to me straight.”

//… I think you need to take your mind off of things. \\ Hannibal sighed; //I think we all need to distract ourselves. Take Jack’s case, I’ll go back to work, and Mikel can go back to having a proper schedule. Sitting here in this hospital room isn’t good for him. \\

“Alright… I promise not to stay out too late, okay?”

//Thank you… Aš tave myliu. \\

“Aš irgi tave myliu.”

……

“Are you really not going to say a word to me?”

Will ignored Jack, trudging through the forest, towards the cabin.

“I didn’t make you go after the Hobbs family!”

Will gritted his teeth.

Jack was right, and he hated to admit it, even to himself.

“I hope your daughter will be alright.”

"… We're going to transfer her back to Baltimore as soon as we can." Will glanced behind him, "Once there, this deal between us is done."

"Despite the fact that you've saved future victims, and could save more?"

"Not at the cost of my family." He entered the log cabin, flicking on his torch and looking around.

Dead and stuffed animals were on the desks, lifeless eyes seeming to follow them around the small space. Heading upstairs, Will was amazed at how clean the place was.

Hobbs was a professional… both of them were.

No blood.

Nothing that could link them to anything aside from possibly hunting outside of seasons.

The top floor was a whole different story.

Antlers lined every square inch of the room, from the ceiling to the floor.

"Could be a permanent fixture in your Evil Minds museum." He whispered, his voice sounding overly loud in the silence of the room.

"Well, what we learn about Garett Jacob Hobbs, will help us catch Abigail and anyone who comes after him." Jack's tone was almost smug, "I know you might not think it right now, but you've saved a lot of people."

"But not my daughter… who is more important than any stranger out there."

That was an accident.

He didn't mean to say that out loud.

Thankfully, Jack seemed to let it go. "There are still seven bodies unaccounted for."

"Well, they were eating them."

"There had to be some parts they weren't eating."

Will kept silent.

Hannibal had used every scrap of meat available, and what he didn't use, was usually given to the dogs.

Looking around, he could easily see that Abigail was involved. This was not a one-person operation.

As if knowing what he was thinking, Jack spoke up again, "We've been conducting house to house interviews around the Hobbs residence and around here… Hobbs spent a lot of time here, with his daughter. She would make the perfect bait."

Will hummed in agreement, only to freeze, the light of his torch picking up something on the floor.

A single strand of red hair.

“Someone else was here.”

Chapter 12

“I don’t want to go to the shop!”

Will felt like screaming.

He’d heard the same complaint from the moment they’d stepped out of the door, and he’d taken Mikel’s hand instead of Hannibal.

“I don’t WANT TO!”

“Don’t scream at me.” Will snapped, instantly regretting it, “Your Motina is going to be busy today, so he doesn’t have time for your lessons. That’s why you’re coming to the shop today instead.” he forced himself to smile, “We’re going to have lots of fun, okay? And on the way home, we’ll go to the park with Cerberus!”

Cerberus perked up at the mention of his name, even when Mikel didn’t look overly impressed.

“You’ll see.” Will sighed, “Today is going to be a great day.”

At least he didn’t have to teach a class… they’d probably clap him or something.

….....

Today was not a great day.

He'd had to force back several panic attacks when re-painting something red, still seeing his daughter's blood all over his hands.

Only the presence of Mikel stopped him from locking the doors and huddling in a corner.

As soon as Will saw that car pulling up outside, he felt his heart sinking to his stomach, especially when he heard Mikel whimpering a little at the sight of Jack and Alana emerging from it.

"It's okay." He whispered, "Nothing bad is going to happen."

"Not again?"

"… Not again." He straightened up, seeing that Alana was taking the lead, entering the shop first.

"We're a bit busy today." Will stated bluntly, ignoring how Alana looked a little taken aback by the tone of his voice.

"I… just wanted to ask how you were."

"How am I meant to be, out of curiosity?" Will frowned, "My daughter is currently…" he looked down at Mikel, "… hurt, and it could have been prevented. Now, I'm being ambushed in my shop."

"Ambushed? It's not an ambush, it's- "Alana winced, "-Okay, it's a little bit of an ambush."

"We expected to see you back at the FBI headquarters." Jack stated bluntly, "For a debrief."

Will shrugged, “I wasn’t told that, and even if you did tell me, I have a shop to run, remember? I can’t just go swanning off to the FBI every time you whistle for me, like I’m your good little bloodhound. It’s a good way to get bit that.”

“Are you comparing yourself to a rabid dog?”

“Even the most well-behaved dog has a snapping point.”

For a moment, the pair just stared at each other, until Alana awkwardly cleared her throat.

“Jack has been… pushing for you to be permitted active return to the field, the questions is- “

“- whether or not I want that?” Will didn’t take his eyes off of Jack, “No. I don’t.”

“I want you in the field. A psych eval and you’ll- “

“- I literally married a psychologist, I know all the tricks! The answer is still, no!” Will forced himself to take a deep breath, “No Jack. I just want me and my family to be left alone.”

Jack opened his mouth again, only to be cut off at the sound of sobbing. Slowly, everyone looked down to see Mikel sobbing curled up into a little ball as Cerberus stood in front of him, tiny little growls breaking free.

“M-make the bad man go away Papa!” The four-year-old sobbed, heading over to Will and burying his face into his legs, “M-m-make him go away.”

There were no actual tears.

Will had never felt so proud.

When he looked up however, he could see the frown on Alana's face.

She worked with children.

She could tell what real crying was and what was fake, having worked with children before.

Clearing his throat, he drew their attention back to him. "I think you should leave." He sighed, "Just… leave us alone. I need to finish my work, and then visit my daughter."

…….

"The nerve of that man!" Hannibal fumed, still stuffing the 'pork' chops with the blue cheese, bacon and chive mix, "He just wants to use you to further his own career."

"I know."

"And now he thinks that he can force you into doing HIS job for him. I wonder if he's having trouble sleeping at night, I hope he is!"

There was nothing Will loved seeing more than Hannibal riled up…When their daughter wasn't the hospital.

There had been no change, which Will determinedly chose to believe was good news.

She wasn't getting worse.

That was good news.

“Jack thinks I need therapy.”

Hannibal scoffed, “What you need is a way out of the dark places when Jack sends you there.” He very carefully placed a knife on the chopping board, “He’s being very… rude.”

“And we would be the first people under suspicion if anything happened to him.” Will pointed out, moving to stand behind Hannibal, gently massaging at those firm shoulders, “Patience… we’ve got bigger targets to focus on first.”

“… Do you know where she is?”

“No, but I’ll find out.” Will snarled, “I’ll find out.”

…….

Beverly called them the following morning to tell them about the bodies in the woods, mushrooms growing on the body.

//It’s just a heads up. \\ she warned him, // Jack will probably call you. \\

“And I’ll ignore him.”

//… And if me, Price or Zeller call you? \\

Mikel had enjoyed Fleming’s company.

It would be a shame to alienate the forensic group.

“I’ll answer… and help as best I can.”

//Thank you \\ She sounded audibly relieved, //Price and Zeller have asked about Mikel and Fleming’s next playdate by the way, just a heads up. \\

“When Mischa is out of the woods… no pun intended, we’ll think about it.”

She made an understanding noise, before they ended the conversation.

…….

One of the victims was apparently still alive at the scene, only to die later en-route to the hospital.

Will couldn’t help but be curious, reading over the news report as he prepared to leave for work.

“I’m happy to take Mikel with me today.” Hannibal stated, packing their lunches in small Tupperware boxes, “I’ve been expressively told that your shop is… boring.”

“It’s so hard to please him.” Will rolled his eyes, but he could understand the sentiment, “I guess I’ll bring Winston with me, then. Less complaining there.” His tone was playful, and when he glanced over at Mikel, he chuckled at the pout on the child’s face, “Don’t worry, I know you love Motina more than me.”

“Papa!”

“Will.” Hannibal shook his head, a smirk playing at the edge of his lips, “Don’t tease him like that.”

“That’s my job.” Will moved over to press a quick kiss to his son’s curly-haired head anyway, as an apology, “I’ll see you both later, okay?”

“We’ll see you later.”

Will pulled Hannibal into a kiss, as they both went their separate ways, neither of them noticing the red-haired woman watching from the other side of the street.

Chapter 13

“Cerberus is more than capable of walking Mikel.” Hannibal chuckled fondly, watching as Mikel trotted around the upstairs library, the poor puppy in his arms, “I think he’d prefer that to be honest.”

Mikel pouted, but did as he was told, giggling when Cerberus immediately took off running, darting back and forth between the child and the opposite wall.

“Five more minutes, okay?”

“Okay.”

Today, Hannibal was determined to introduce his son to Shakespeare, as a distraction to both him and Mikel over what was going on.

Mikel liked Lion King, so he was going to start with Hamlet. He was sure he had an old theatre recording somewhere.

The phone rang, prompting Hannibal to answer it, instinctively knowing that it was his mate.

// Jack keeps calling me, and this is the only thing stopping me from driving right to the FBI headquarters and shoving his phone down his throat. \\

Not even a polite hello.

Hannibal did so love it when Will got like this.

“I assume this is over those bodies in the woods?”

//What else?! \\

“It’s as though he wants you to have a mental breakdown.”

//I know, which is why I need to get my mind taken off all this. \\ Will sighed wearily, // What’s on the lesson plans for today? \\

“Hamlet.”

//… Hannibal, he’s four.\\

“A perfect time to start learning Shakespeare.” Hannibal paused, catching a shadow moving near his waiting room door.

Like someone was waiting just outside the door.

//-bal? Hannibal? \\

“Apologies.” Hannibal sighed, “My thoughts have been wandering today, and I feel like it is not going to improve. Can I assume that I will see you at the hospital later?”

//Jack would have to literally arrest me to stop me. \\

“Let’s not tempt fate.”

The shadow passed by the door again, as Will chuckled fondly.

“I will see you later, my love.”

//See you later. \\

The call ended, as Hannibal looked up at Mikel, gesturing for him to stay quiet as he went to open the door.

Rushed footprints moved away from the door as he opened it up.

“Miss Kimble?”

Freddie Lounds (because honestly, her photo is on her Tattle crime website, does this false identity usually work?) nodded, giving Hannibal a small smile before entering the office, eyes immediately scanning the room.

Looking for Mikel possibly?

She had followed them this morning, so it was likely she knew about the four-year-old.

“I-I’ve never been to a psychiatrist before.” She played nervous well, “And I am unfortunately thorough. So, you’re one of three doctors I’m interviewing.” She shrugged self-consciously, “It’s like a bake-off.”

Oh, she was good.

“I’m very supportive of bake offs.” He couldn’t help the quip.

Will hated the cannibal puns, even though he made just as many.

“It’s important for you to find someone you’re comfortable with.”

Freddie smiled, “I can see you as my therapist… which is good. If I can’t open up emotionally, this couldn’t work, right?”

Hannibal had to wonder if this really did work.

“May I ask you, why now?”

The smile faded just a little, before she took a seat, “Actually, can I ask you a few questions first?”

“… Of course not.”

“I love that you’ve written so much about social exclusion in secondary gender roles, and since that’s why I’m here- “

A beta, the middle gender of society worried about something like that? His paper was focused on shy alphas and confident omegas, to put it simply.

“Miss Lounds, I’m afraid I can’t continue this façade any longer.” He sighed wearily, “I have actual patients to prepare for.” The smile disappeared from her face, “This is highly unethical, even for a tabloid journalist.”

It was time to show her what acting was really like.

Wearily, he rubbed at the space between his eyes, letting out a few distress hormones as he turned away from her.

"I-I'm so embarrassed." She whispered, taking a step back when she heard Mikel whimpering up above, affected by his Mama's 'distress'.

Hannibal would be sure to make him his favourite meal tonight to make up for this.

"I'm afraid I must ask you for your bag." He stated, turning around, watching as she brought the bag closer to herself.

"Pardon?"

"Your bag. Please, hand it over."

When she hesitated again, Hannibal tried not to snarl. "I'd rather not take it from you."

Slowly, she handed over. He thanked her and opened it up, seeing the recording device inside. "I can't imagine my phone conversation was very interesting." He commented as she immediately tried to defend herself.

"I was recording our conversation."

"Our conversation… yours and mine." He shook his head, "Neither of us believe that." He pulled the device out, releasing a few more distress pheromones into the air, making her squirm uncomfortably, "It's bad enough that Jack Crawford is harassing my husband, but now you have decided to harass our family as well."

He turned, but not before catching the interested look on her face.

“Harassment?” She cleared her throat, “I apologise if you think that, but- “

“- But?” Hannibal shook his head, “I saw you this morning, following me to work. And now, you’ve entered my office under the pretence of employing my services, when all you really wanted was to know more about my husband and his family…. You’ve been terribly rude Miss Lounds. The only question that I have, is whether I should file the restraining and no contact order against Jack Crawford first… or you.”

She simply stared at him in silence.

“I would make the decision quickly Miss Lounds.”

“... If I delete the recordings that I made, will you answer just one of my questions?”

“It depends on the question.” Slowly, he handed the recorder over, “You don’t know until you ask it though.”

She sighed, deleting the recordings, before looking him in the eyes (which Hannibal couldn’t help but begrudgingly respect. His maroon eyes had a habit of unnerving ‘prey’).

“You said Agent Jack Crawford is harassing your husband? Am I okay to get a few more details on that?”

Hannibal only just resisted the urge to smirk.

Hook. Line. Sinker.

……

“Mmm, smells good.” Will sighed, “Is that Mikel’s favourite?”

‘Bacon’ Bolognese, with black pepper pasta and a luscious poached egg right on top.

“Hmm, we had a bit of a rough afternoon.” Hannibal held up a hand to stop Will in his tracks, “Nothing that can’t be fixed… but Jack is about to have a bit of a nasty surprise I think.”

Will raised an eyebrow, “Oh?”

“Yes… and then we’re going to invite him to dinner.”

“Like, ‘dinner dinner’ or- “

“- As a guest.”

“… Huh?!”

Chapter 14

Will had received the call from Jack the following morning (after spending the majority of the previous evening sulking), hanging up with an impressed smirk on his face.

“Apparently Tattle Crime has reported Jack’s…over-zealousness and some of the higher ups in the FBI are looking into it.”

Hannibal chuckled, “That is only a very small part of my plan.”

“Oh… care to share?”

“All in good time.” Hannibal turned to his son, “Can you help me set the table please sweetie?”

“Okay!”

Will stared after his mate for a few moments, before shaking his head and deciding to just let Hannibal handle it.

His omega was extremely competent in that regard.

……

“I just can’t believe this.” Jack didn’t seem to question as to why he’d suddenly been invited around for dinner, “Harassment? What harassment?!”

Will opened his mouth, only to shut it again when Hannibal gave him a stern glare, carefully pouring the red sauce over all of their meals.

“Loin, served with a red fruit Cumberland sauce.” He stated for Jack’s benefit, who was looking a little overwhelmed already at what he was being served.

“Loin… what kind?”

“Pork.”

“Wonderful.” Jack cleared his throat, “Sorry, I don’t get many opportunities to eat a home-cooked meal. My wife and I both work and as much as I tried to avoid it… I ended up marrying my mother.” He turned to Mikel, who was clearly not happy with the invitation to invite Jack round, “I can imagine you’ll be as good as your mother one day, hm? You’re going to be beating off those Alphas with a stick.”

“We’re trying not to assume his secondary gender.” Will interjected, before Hannibal could, “Stereotyping and all that.”

“Ah, yes.” Jack nodded, “I remember Alana mentioning that once or twice. I hear it’s very common nowadays.”

The tone if disbelief wasn’t needed, but Will swallowed his next words and simply nodded, turning to his plate, knowing that Hannibal would change the subject almost naturally.

“Your mother didn’t cook then?”

His omega was amazing like that.

“No, she cooked.” Jack chuckled, “I just wish that she didn’t.” He glanced over as Mikel, who was quietly attempting to cut his meat as neatly as possible, “You’re very lucky you’ve

got Dr Lecter here kid. My mum used to make this dish she'd call Oriental Noodles. Spaghetti, soy sauce, bouillon cubes and spam… I was a very thin kid."

Hannibal looked a little ill, swallowing his mouthful before forcing a smile onto his face.

"Well, next time, bring your wife…. We'd love to have you both for dinner."

Will bit at the inside of his cheek, glancing over at a smirking Hannibal, who was watching Jack enjoy his meal.

"So, Will." Jack then turned his attentions to him, "What made you set up a repair shop? It's a bit of an odd career shift. Policeman to handyman."

"I like fixing things." Will shrugged, "Nothing to profile there."

There was a lot to profile there, but he hoped Jack would heed the unspoken warning and not.

"Hannibal was a fantastic supporter when I was a cop, and when I decided that it wasn't for me, he supported me there too." Will confessed.

"… I'm a bit amazed you married a psychiatrist."

Will scoffed, "Better than just being amazed that I'm married in the first place I suppose."

"Alana has told me that you're… suspicious of psychiatrists."

Will was sure that was breaking some sort of confidentiality issue.

“I know how my mind works… I don’t need anyone else telling me that.” Will gave Jack a sharp look, “I’m not broken, and Hannibal seems to be the only psychiatrist who understands that.”

Jack glanced between the three of them, before holding his hands up in almost mock surrender, “Alright.” He lifted his glass in a mock toast, “I can see when I’ve been beaten.”

Somehow… Will doubted that very much.

……..

“So, he was feeding them sugar water?” Will frowned in confusion, phone on speaker on his desk as he twiddled with a boat engine, “Any theories?”

“Mushrooms love sugar, but I pointed out that it’s sometimes given to recovering alcoholics!” Zeller piped up, “They crave sugar after all.”

“It’s not just alcoholics who have compromised endocrine systems though.” Will frowned from his position on the floor, “You mentioned that they all died of kidney failure….. what if they were all diabetics? Death by diabetic ketoacidosis.”

There were three almost identical gasps of realisation.

“We need to check medical records and see if they’re all diabetics.” Zeller stated.

“He probably induces a coma and then puts them in the ground, that confirms the strange crime scene, right?” Will abandoned the engine for the moment, taking a seat at the desk.

“How can he induce a coma though?”

“He changes their medication, so he’s a doctor or a pharmacist, someone who works in the medical profession.”

And they’d dug up his mushroom garden.

He would be wanting to start anew.

……

“What are you and Mischa watching tonight?” Will asked when he entered the hospital room, eyes drawn to the little TV the nurses had been kind enough to lend to them during their visit.

“Aladdin three.” Mikel whispered, “Mischa likes the music in this one.”

“Oh, does she?”

Mischa would probably be thrilled that she missed this one.

As Mikel watched his film, Will moved over to Hannibal. “Any sign of change?”

“No, but nor is there a sign that she’s been getting worse so…” Hannibal shrugged, “… there’s a silver lining there.” He had his tablet in his hands, looking a little more than annoyed, “There is this we have to be concerned with however.”

He handed the tablet over to Will, whose eyes focused on the Tattlecrime headline, “Ouch.”

‘FBI Harassment and Child Endangerment.”

“I don’t mind her talking about Jack.” Hannibal snarled, “But bringing Mischa into this?”

“How does she even know about Mischa?”

“Knowing her tactics, she probably followed one of us here.” Hannibal felt weary, “It seems as though I was… not as harsh as I should have been with her.”

“Actually…” Will mused, “… this does work. Jack harassing a civilian who’s daughter was… badly hurt. Yeah, Tattle Crime is unreliable, but a lot of people read it.”

“… So, we’re leaving her alone.”

Will chuckled at Hannibal’s disgruntled expression.

“Yes, we’re leaving her alone.”

Chapter 15

Will had to admit that he'd had a little too much whiskey that evening.

He tried to play it off, but the fact that Lounds had possibly been in the hospital, where their daughter lay unconscious and vulnerable, sent a shiver up and down his spine.

On the plus side though, with the information that he'd given to the Forensic trio, they knew who the Mushroom man was… even if they hadn't caught him.

"William?"

Will looked blearily up at his omega, smiling softly at the sight of Hannibal wearing his silk pyjamas, a soft-looking dressing gown and hair hanging loose around his face, "Hey." He whispered, "Did Mikel settle down okay?"

"Hmm, I was thinking about starting him on The Three Musketeers." Hannibal took a seat next to him, clearly a little concerned, "However, I can just see him asking for fencing lessons in the future."

"You would love him to have fencing lessons." Will chuckled, "So long as he didn't scratch the walls practicing."

Hannibal couldn't deny that, chuckling fondly, before gently removing the glass from Will's hands.

"What's wrong?"

"… Can you really believe that our lives were completely- "He paused, re-thinking his words, "- mostly normal a little over two weeks ago?"

“Hmm, it’s hard to believe isn’t it.” Hannibal traced his fingers up and down Will’s arm, “But you are over-thinking everything. Come to bed?”

Will glanced over at Hannibal, who was looking a little red in the cheeks, which made him smirk.

“Is my omega looking for a little bit of attention?” He murmured, leaning in close to whisper in Hannibal’s ear, “What’s set you off, hmm?”

Hannibal let out a little chuckle, “Does anything need to set me off. Sometimes I might just need my Alpha.”

“Well, I don’t want to disappoint.”

Lifting Hannibal into his arms, Will carried his mate to their room, his whiskey forgotten downstairs.

He’d let Hannibal think that he had this victory.

…….

“Apparently Jack tried to arrest Lounds.” Will stated at the dinner table, feeling a lot better after that night, “He tried to get her on slander charges, but of course, it’s not and he knows it so there was nothing he could do.”

“Shall we expect a call from him?”

“He’ll call me first probably.” Will shrugged, “I’ll handle him.”

They finished their breakfast in the usual manner, promising to meet up in the hospital later, before going their separate ways.

…….

Hannibal was going to be late that evening, so Will took a quick detour to grab some Christmas presents. Something Harry Potter for Mischa (Slytherin Throw Blanket) and a Paint Your Own Dragon Moneybox for Mikel.

Mikel probably wouldn't go too crazy, with multiple colours, on it, but maybe he could persuade Hannibal that buying their son a copy of The Hobbit to go with it wouldn't hurt.

He entered the hospital, nodding at the usual nurses and receptionists, before heading to Mischa's room.

He entered… and froze.

Nothing.

No bed.

No daughter.

Nothing.

His phone buzzed in his pocket, promoting him to answer it without really looking at the caller ID. "H-Hello?"

“Will, it’s Jack.” Jack sounded guilty, “Stannis, our perp, knows about Mischa…. He read Lounds article and cornered her this morning and- “

Will hung up on him, dropping the phone to the ground, as he rushed over to the receptionist desk.

“Where is she?” He snapped, “Mischa Lecter-Graham, the girl in 408, where is she?!”

“They took her for tests.”

“Who took her?!”

Silence as the receptionist frowned in confusion.

Vaguely, he saw the elevator doors open, as Hannibal and Mikel stepped onto the floor.

“WHO TOOK HER?!”

“I-I don’t know!”

“Will?” Hannibal frowned, “What’s going- “ He stopped as Will took off running down the corridor, hesitating for a moment, before lifting Mikel into his arms and attempting to catch up.

They headed down several flights of stairs, seeing an unfamiliar man pushing Mischa down the corridor.

“HEY!”

Will shot forwards, tackling to the ground, punching him across the face and breaking his nose if the loud CRACK was anything to go by.

“Will.” Hannibal called out to him, “Enough.”

When Will turned and glared at him, Hannibal glanced up at the walls.

You didn’t know where there were cameras.

Placing Mikel on Mischa’s bed, Hannibal reached out and pulled Will to his feet, leaving the groaning killer on the floor, clutching at his busted nose.

“What were you going to do to her?” He asked, voice low and dangerous as the beta shuddered.

“We-we all evolved from mycelium, I-I was just- “

“- Going to bury her alive?!”

Hannibal instinctively tightened his grasp on Will’s arm, knowing that the constant touch would help keep Will in check.

“I-I don’t understand.” The beta whined, looking up at them fearfully, “T-the reporter said that you- “He looked at Will here, “- she said that you understand me!”

Dammit.

Lounds shouldn't know a thing about Will's ability, which means that there's either a leak in the FBI… or Jack opened his big, fat mouth.

"I. Don't." Will snapped, still straining in Hannibal's grasp, but not overly seriously as Mikel was watching on.

"You would have!" The beta almost seemed desperate to make Will understand, "You would have! You walk through a field of mycelium, and they know you're there! They know! Their spores reach out for you when you walk by!" He glanced over at Mischa, "I know what you're reaching for… your daughter. You should have let me plant her. You have found her in a field, finally able to reach back!"

"POLICE!"

"Come on Will." Hannibal whispered in his beloved's ear, "Let's get Mischa back to her room."

……..

As Mikel was with Will, Hannibal met with Jack.

"How did that man know about Will's gift?"

Jack didn't look at him.

"He said that Freddie Lounds told him… and how did she know?"

"Are you accusing me of something?"

“Yes.” Hannibal raised an eyebrow, “I can take this… accusations a little higher if necessary?”

Jack’s entire frame tensed at the question before he turned and stormed away.

Hannibal watched him leave almost contemplatively, his thoughts turning to Freddie Lounds.

She couldn’t be trusted with the knowledge that she had, but he would give her a chance.

Who knows?

Maybe she would surprise him.

Chapter 16

“You should have let me kill him.”

It was almost midnight when Hannibal heard the whisper from his right, rolling over to see Will staring up at the ceiling.

“Killing feels good to you.” He answered, “But you know we have to keep our heads down for the time being. Especially as Jack is under pressure and wanting to blame whoever he can… and Mikel was there. Mikel is too young yet.”

“I know.” Will sighed, rolling over until they were lying face to face, “I know you want to wait until he’s older… much older, but that man- “

“- didn’t get to do anything.” Hannibal leaned over and pressed his lips to Wills’, “Mischa is still safe.”

……

Abigail Hobbs was stood right in front of her, eyes dark.

The gun shook in Mischa’s grasp.

“You can’t do it.” Abigail hissed, “You’re not a killer. Not like me.”

Mischa tried to raise the gun, only to feel it slipping through her fingers, like it was water.

“I am.” She almost whispered to herself, “I-I am!”

“You can’t do it.” Abigail was closer now, “I’m the daughter that they deserve… I’m the killer that they want, not you.”

“I-I-I- “

There was a knife in her hands now, and a matching one in Abigail’s… well, Abigail’s was covered in blood.

Mischa’s blood.

…….

Mischa’s eyes shot open, feeling the breathing tube in her throat as she instantly started to panic. Her eyes flicked down, hand already wrenching off the blood pressure monitor, IV line and anything else she could grab, the heart monitor going crazy beside her.

She didn’t notice the people racing into the room.

She needed to get out of here.

……..

“She was distressed apparently.” Hannibal had never looked so flustered, grabbing what they needed as they all tried to race out of the house, “No other health concerns, but she hasn’t said a word since she woke up.”

Will didn’t say a word either, face creased with worry as he lifted Mikel into his arms and headed out of the front door, dogs all yapping around their feet.

Neither of them were expecting to see Alana standing just outside, leaning against her car. “I heard the news.” She stated, “I figured neither of you would be in a fit state to drive.”

She knew?

How did she know?

“Jack wanted the doctors to inform him when she was awake as well.” Alana confessed, “I managed to persuade him from holding off on the questioning until Mischa had at least seen you and was feeling a little better.”

“Thank you.” Hannibal knew the gratitude was a little stiff, “I think we can manage the journey ourselves however.”

“… Mikel’s t-shirt is on the wrong way round.”

In unison, Will and Hannibal turned their attention to Mikel, who was idly playing the label that sticking out of the front of his t-shirt.

“… Ah.”

……

Hannibal didn’t like it, but Alana ended up driving them to the hospital. Mikel’s shirt was on the right way right now, but he had to deal with Alana’s false platitudes.

He knew why she was here.

Jack couldn't come and visit himself, so Alana had offered to go in his place, using her Child Psychologist degree as a reason.

She thought she'd be able to get Mischa to confide in her.

"The doctor's think there's minimal damage to her vocal chords." Alana broke the uneasy silence.

"Yes, they told us as much over the phone." Hannibal tried to stay calm, "Can I ask how you know this? As far as I'm aware, you're not Mischa's parent."

Will glanced at him in the rear-view mirror, but didn't say a word, as Alana stuttered over a pathetic explanation over being concerned and just happening to call the hospital at the exact right time.

She stood up against Jack, and then she did things like this.

Hannibal didn't trust her, and he wanted her to know this. Thankfully, she would just see it as him being an overly possessive Omega.

She might try and persuade Will to start putting space between them, but there was one thing she didn't know.

Will loved him being possessive.

Satisfied with that, he turned his attention back to Mikel and kept him entertained for the rest of the journey.

…….

With a bag full of clothes for Mischa and several of her personal belongings, Hannibal knew that they were technically running down these corridors but couldn't bring himself to care.

Not carrying anything except a Mickey Mouse teddy, Mikel reached the room first, squealing in glee at the sight of Mischa sitting up in her bed as he raced to climb onto it.

"Woah, woah, woah!" Will chuckled, darting forwards and catching his son with one arm, "Careful there, Mischa probably doesn't want you climbing all over her."

"I don't mind." Mischa croaked out, eyes filling with tears, lifting up one arm as Mikel snuggled into that gap, "You didn't bring any of the dogs though?"

"The hospital has some rather strict rules regarding them." Hannibal chuckled, placing the bag on the ground, reaching over to gently pull his daughter into a hug, "It's so good to see you awake."

Mischa weakly returned the hug, an unsure look flashing across her face when she saw Alana hovering in the doorway.

"Hello Mischa." Alan moved a little closer, "My name is Doctor Alana Bloom, I- "

"- I know who you are." Mischa frowned, "We literally met… well, it was last week for me, but we've met before."

Alana's expression didn't change, "I wasn't sure what you remembered."

"Don't worry." Mischa rolled her eyes, "I remember nearly getting my throat s- "

"- Not in front of Mikel."

Mischa glanced down at her brother, who was idly playing with his Mickey Mouse teddy.

“Sorry.” She whispered, “Yeah… I remember everything.” Before an awkward silence could fill the room, she looked over at the bags, “If one of those has schoolwork in them, I’m going to scream.” She forced herself to smile, as Hannibal found himself replicating the pained expression.

“Not as much as you might think. Your school has agreed to be a little lenient under the current circumstances.”

“That doesn’t sound like my school.”

As the small family continued to chatter and tease, none of them paid any attention to Alana in the doorway, who watched the scene with no small amount of interest.

There was something she was missing here.

She just couldn’t figure out what it was though.

……

“I’ve got seven families waiting.” Jack sighed, “No, let me rephrase…. Demanding that we find what is left of their daughters.”

“And how is Mischa involved in that?” Will tried not to growl, “Unless she’s a suspect and you forgot to mention that?”

“No, no, no…. but Abigail Hobbs might have told her something before she- “

“- nearly killed our daughter?” Will shook his head, “You think, that they were having a nice conversation before the Hobbs girl tried to slit her throat?”

“It’s just a thought. Mischa might not even realise the significance of what they talked about!”

Will desperately wished Hannibal could be there with him. The omega had a calming influence on him, which might keep him from breaking this quiet, non-Alpha like role he’d built for himself.

“My daughter is recovering from a near-fatal wound.” Will whispered, “She’s traumatised.”

“Doctor Bloom didn’t seem to think she seemed that traumatised.”

Will couldn’t help the betrayed look he shot at Alana, who looked a little sheepish.

“I said that I thought she was hiding something.” She confessed, “And I did say that that might be trauma.”

“Or it might be something else.” Jack shrugged, “The one that Will claims to be a copycat, did happen whilst Mischa was in Minnesota. Maybe the Hobbs girl didn’t want the competition.”

“JACK!”

“I’m not listening to this!” Will snapped, getting to his feet, “Mischa was with Hannibal, me and Mikel all evening and all night. This is just you grasping at straws in a desperate attempt to save your crumbling career!”

“How DARE you- “

There was a gentle knock on the door, interrupting Jack mid-rant.

“I hate to interrupt.” Hannibal stated, a sleeping Mikel in his arms, “But we should really get going.”

“Doctor Lector, we are in the middle- “

“- We’re done.” Will got to his feet, “Call me when you get your head screwed on right!”

“WILL!”

But Will, Hannibal and Mikel were already gone.

Chapter 17

Mischa hummed along to the music playing on her ipod, scribbling some notes in her schoolbook as she fought to catch up.

"All you wanna do… all ya wanna do baby…" She whisper sang out-loud, only vaguely hearing the door to her room opening.

Believing it was her parents, she placed the books to one side and paused the song, looking up, only to frown at the red-headed woman standing at the foot of her bed.

"Umm, hello?" She frowned, eyeing the woman.

She wasn't dressed like a doctor or a nurse. She might be an FBI agent, but there was something in her eyes that suggested that wasn't the case.

If it weren't for the fact that she knew a killer when she saw them (perks of living with two), Mischa would say that the hungry look in her eyes was linked to psychopathy.

No… this was a reporter who thought she could get an easy story.

"Hello Mischa." A soft and gentle voice, aimed to put people at ease, "I'm Freddie Lounds." She held out her hand, which Mischa eyed distrustfully.

"So… not a doctor or a nurse or a psychiatrist." She stated, "Otherwise you'd have introduced yourself like that."

Freddie smiled thinly, "You certainly take after Doctor Lector." She sighed, forcing the grin to be a little wider, "I'm a reporter. I want to tell your story."

“My story?” Mischa raised an eyebrow, “Unlikely.”

“I would and will never lie to you.”

“Sounds like something a liar would say.”

Freddie was silent for a moment, before straightening up, “You are a survivor… twice over. Wouldn’t you want people to be inspired by your story?”

“Hobbs didn’t cut my throat deep enough and I was unconscious for the second one.” Mischa had over-heard the nurses talking about that incident, “It’s not like I faced down two killers in a western showdown or something.”

“Sometimes surviving is more than fighting back.”

Mischa found that she didn’t have a good answer for that, glancing over at the door when she heard a familiar pair of feet racing towards the room. When the door opened seconds later, she couldn’t contain the sigh of relief, watching as her parent’s eyes focused on Freddie and their expressions tightened.

“Miss Lounds.” Her Motina straightened up, “I don’t recall giving you the permission to enter this room.”

“I don’t need permission- “

“- Yes, you do.” Her Motina stepped forwards, and Mischa had to bite back the smirk, “This is a private room, paid for by my husband and I, and you don’t have our permission to be in here.”

“Translation, get the hell out.” Will growled.

Freddie turned back to Mischa, her smile a little more uncertain as she pulled a calling card out of her pocket, “If you ever do want to talk- “She stopped as the card was snatched from her hand, watching as Will handed it over to Hannibal, who pocketed it carefully.

She didn’t understand the significance of this… but everyone else in the room did.

Mischa hoped it was a tongue dish.

Freddie beat a hasty retreat, as an awkward silence fell over the room.

“You’ve been in bed for days.” Hannibal sighed, “Maybe we should go for a walk.”

……..

Mischa felt better now that she was dressed in her clothes, slowly moving through the hospital gardens as she clung onto her Dad’s arm. She was glad she opted to wear a scarf to hide the bandaged wound on her neck as they got curious stares from everyone.

“Is she still out there?”

Will and Hannibal glanced at each other, before Will awkwardly cleared his throat. “Yes, but she’s not getting anywhere near you, you know- “

“- I do know that.” Mischa rolled her eyes, “Like she would dare, but I think I owe her some payback for this!” She pointed at the scarf, “I’m going to have to wear these like a hipster!”

“You want to hide the scar?” Hannibal frowned.

Mischa paused, “You… don’t think it’ll be hideous?”

They took a seat on a nearby bench, with Hannibal taking his daughter’s hand into his own, thumb rubbing softly over her knuckles. “I think…” He began softly, “… That it’s a positive sign. A sign that you survived.”

“… People are going to stare at school.”

“Let them.”

Mischa was silent for a moment, before she shook her head, “I should be scared, but I’m not… I just want to-to- “

“- You will get your chance.” Will took the other seat next to her, Mikel on his lap, “Abigail won’t be able to stay away from this situation, from us. She will make a move against us, and when she does, we’ll have her.”

“… I want her to be my first.” Mischa whispered, “My first kill.”

“That, I’m sure we can arrange.” Hannibal stated firmly, “At the moment though, let’s focus on getting you back on your feet. Have you caught up with your schoolwork?”

Mischa groaned, and Will chuckled.

Everything was getting back to normal.

……..

“Mister Graham!”

Will looked up as they entered the car park, looking up and frowning at the sight of Freddie Lounds standing by his car.

“I didn’t get to introduce myself earlier.” She beamed, not seeming to see anything strange about this situation, “I’m Freddie Lounds, I- “

Will ignored the outstretched hand, “Are you trying to salvage this joke from the mouth of madness?” He asked, voice soft, but no less dangerous.

She was clearly confused by the words for a moment, before smiling softly, “I just wanted to apologise for my behaviour.”

“In general, or just for sneaking into my daughter’s room, breaking all manner of child protection protocols… just to try and get a story?”

“I was… misguided.”

“Miss Lounds, you are pushing our patience.” Hannibal stated, holding Mikel close as the four-year old buried his face into his Motina’s chest.

“I know we both have our own reasons for being here, but I promise that I care about what happens to your daughter.”

Will frowned, “What happens to her? Interesting choice of words. My daughter needs to heal, and then she’ll come back home. The only thing you care about about her, is that you think she’s some sort of ticket to a book deal?” He raised an eyebrow, “That’s right, correct?”

“… I think we could help each other.”

“Ah, I get you close to my daughter and- “Will made a show of pausing, “- what do I get out of it? Seems a bit one-sided.”

“I can help you with the harassment from the FBI.” She ventured, “I can help!”

“Jack is already burying his own grave.” Will sighed, “He doesn’t need your help in doing that.” When Freddie looked like she was going to protest further, “Leave it Miss Lounds.”

They moved past her in order to get into the car and leave, only for Freddie to reach out and grab Hannibal's sleeve.

“Please, just let me talk and explain- “

“- Let go of him.” Will couldn’t hold back the growl.

Not only was she stopping his omega, but she was also holding his son ‘captive.’

And that would not be tolerated.

A low growl rumbled from his chest, and for a beta like Lounds, it triggered some very clear and some very obvious threat-based instincts. She let go and quickly took a step back, before schooling her face back into neutrality.

Will could see the fear and he was sure Hannibal could smell it.

“I can make life much harder for you.” She snapped, “A lot, lot harder.”

“Miss Lounds… it’s not wise to piss off a guy who used to think about killing people for a living.”

Hannibal resisted the urge to groan behind Will.

That… was not going to go down well.

Chapter 18

“It’s not very wise… to piss off a guy who used to think about killing people for a living.”

Will ignored Jack, moving around his shop, collecting the parts that he would need for a new job.

“Your Omega clearly isn’t as commanding as I thought he was if he allowed those words to come out of your mouth.”

Will’s grip tightened around the engine part that he was holding, forcing himself to take deep breaths before he ruined all of their carefully laid plans for Jack, “The story wasn’t about my daughter.” He stated, “Lounds can say what she likes about me.”

“Oh, so it’s a victory then!”

There was a moment of silence, before Jack spoke up again, “I want to speak to your daughter.”

“And I want world peace, we can’t always get what we want.”

“She is the key- “

“- No, she is a victim Jack!” Will snapped, “Abigail Hobbs attacked her, and you’re treating her like a suspect!”

Jack’s fist clenched, before he visibly took a deep breath, “Look… I was wrong to treat her like a suspect, but you have to admit that the Hobbs girl might have told her something?!”

“Have you searched the Hobbs residence yet?”

Jack looked a little taken aback by the venom in Will’s voice, “Yes… why?”

“And you haven’t found anything there?”

“Nothing that we didn’t expect.”

“And you think that Abigail told Mischa the location of every single one of those missing girls, who will miraculously help you close this case?”

“I think she was told something.”

“I doubt it.” Will slammed the part on the desk, “Leave my daughter alone Jack.”

There was a moment of silence, before Jack spoke up again, “Only if you agree to look at the Hobbs residence…. See if there’s something that we missed.”

“…. Are you seriously blackmailing me into helping you so that you’ll leave my thirteen-year-old daughter alone?!”

“I prefer to think of it as… helpful pushing.”

Will was going to kill him one day.

Soon.

……

“I’d quite like to go.”

Will looked up from his tea (‘lamb’, tomato, and lentil soup), frowning at his mate, “You… want to go to the Hobbs home?”

“There is a chance that the Hobbs may return to a place that she finds familiar.” Hannibal explained, “Mischa is due to be released in the next couple of days. It’ll do her good to get out of the home.”

“… You want to give the chance to- “Will paused, looking over at Mikel, who seemed oblivious to it all, “- give Mischa the chance to meet Abigail again?”

“It will be good for her.” Hannibal sipped at his wine, “It might make her feel more secure, safer.”

Will chuckled, “I can almost guarantee that Alana won’t see that as a viable form of trauma therapy.”

Hannibal chuckled, before looking over at Mikel, “Are you nearly finished little one?”

Mikel nodded, the red soup smeared around his mouth as Hannibal smiled fondly at him.

“Good, you may some ice cream once you’re finished, then bath and bed, okay?”

“With a story?”

“I think we can manage a story.”

“The Hobbit?”

Hannibal glanced over at Will, who took care to avoid his gaze, “If you wish.”

When Mikel turned his attention back to the food, Hannibal sent his husband a warning glare, rolling his eyes when Will gave him his best innocent smile.

He would have his revenge on his Alpha for this.

……

“And then Bilbo said- “

“- I thought you said you would never let him get into Fantasy for as long as you lived?” Mischa teased her Motina, leaning forwards in the seat of the rental car.

“It seems I was outplayed in this matter.” Hannibal stated serenely, “A battle has been won, but I will win the war.”

Will found that he was almost looking forward to it, pulling up outside the Hobb’s residence, taking in the graffiti that was scrawled on the garage door.

‘Cannibals’

“Charming.” Hannibal sighed, seeing the same word on the front door, “Come on.”

They walked past the bloodstain, where Mrs Hobbs had died.

“Why isn’t there a chalk outline and crime scene tape?” Mischa asked.

“They only do the outline if you’re still alive and there’s a chance you might die after the fact.”

“Huh.” Mischa examined the bloodstain for a little longer, an unknown expression flashing across her face, before she looked up and smiled softly at her Papa, “Are we going in?”

“... Yeah. Come on.”

They made their way inside, seeing more blood the further in they went. Entering the kitchen, Will’s eyes focused on that large bloodstain in the corner.

‘Just like her old man... you see?’

“So, the person at the construction site called to warn them?” Mischa whispered, oblivious to her father’s thoughts.

“Yes... “Will sank into his mind space, seeing the pendulum swing, “... Either Abigail or her Father answered the call. No matter which way around, the receptionist spoke to Garrett Jacob Hobbs and told him about the visit…. His behaviour changed.” His eyes flashed back to the bloodstain outside, the memory of Mrs Hobbs stumbling out coming back to him, clutching the knife wound on her neck, “He was the one who killed his wife… but he didn’t expect his daughter to get the best of him.” He headed to the living room, “She saw his attitude change, left her mother to be killed because it would give her the chance to grab the shotgun from the living room.”

“So, she killed her father in self-defence?” Hannibal queried.

“Pre-emptive self-defence, I don’t know if her father would have tried to kill her too… but yes. I think she knew what he was capable of and chose her own survival.” Will sighed, “That’ll make it harder to catch her you know.”

“Hmm, it does add an extra element to the chase.”

“Abigail had a knife though.” Mischa whispered, “Why did she grab a knife as well?”

“…. It was sentimental. There were a lot of memories attached to that knife.” Will sighed, “I can almost guarantee that the knife that was used on Mrs Hobbs, wasn’t the same one that was used on…” He trailed off, clearing his throat, “Mischa, why don’t you take Mikel outside for a bit of fresh air.”

“But- “

“Now!” Will took a deep breath, visibly trying to calm himself down, “Please.”

Mischa clearly didn’t like it, but she nodded anyway, taking Mikel’s hand and leading him outside.

“Will?” Hannibal reached out, taking Will’s hand in his own, “What’s wrong?”

“… I don’t think this is going to be as easy as we think it will be.” Will looked his omega in the eyes, “Not easy at all.”

……

Mischa watched fondly as her brother ran through the brown, orange and red leaves, giggling when they crunched underneath his feet.

“Hello? Excuse me?!”

Mischa tensed up at the unfamiliar voice, looking over to her right to see an unknown, older girl striding towards them. For a split second, she thought it was Abigail, only for the girl to move closer and show that she wasn’t.

“What are you doing here?” The girl asked, not unkindly, clearly seeing a couple of kids playing where they probably shouldn’t.

“Playing in the leaves.” Mischa answered suspiciously, “Our parents are investigators.”

“Ah.” The girl looked up at the house, “She was my best friend you know.”

“Oh?” Mischa glanced over at Mikel, who was completely oblivious to everything.

“I never thought she was the type.” The other girl sighed, “Then again, I never thought her Dad was the type either… maybe the hunting should have been a clue.” She examined Mischa a little closer, “You’re that girl she nearly killed before she ran, right? The daughter of the FBI agent?”

“My parents aren’t FBI agents.” Mischa snapped, “They were just helping the FBI.”

“And you nearly got killed because of it?” The girl looked back at the house, “Why would they bring you back, that doesn’t make any- “ She froze, looking over towards the forest lines, prompting Mischa to do the same.

Mikel was on his knees, hands rummaging through the leaves… as an older man stepped out into view.

“MIKEL!”

Chapter 19

“MIKEL!” Mischa raced forwards, pulling her younger brother into her arms, falling back into the leaves as she stared up at the stranger.

“This is private property!” The other girl snapped, “Why are you lurking around and being a creep?!”

When the man didn’t move, glancing at both girls individually, clearly not finding who he was looking for, the other girl grabbed some rocks off the ground.

“PISS OFF!”

Mischa winced, covering her little brother’s ears. If Mikel started repeated those kinds of words, her Motina was actually going to kill her.

The next thrown rock hit the man in the forehead, cutting through the skin and causing him to yelp in pain, just as Hannibal and Will rounded the corner.

The young man saw the older Alpha male, and thought better of what he was doing, making a run for it, as a woman followed on behind the Alpha/omega pair.

“Marissa!” She hissed, addressing the other girl, “Come home!”

“Why?” Marissa rolled her eyes, “It’s not like I’m talking to Abigail or anything.”

“Come. Home.”

Marissa rolled her eyes, “Why are you being such a BITCH?!” She rolled her eyes, storming past Hannibal and Will, dodging her mother’s attempts to grab her as she did so.

“What does bitch mean?” Mikel asked innocently, as all eyes turned to him.

“It’s a word I had better not hear again.” Hannibal stated firmly, as Mikel nodded quickly, “Mischa, did that man say anything to you?”

“No.” She whispered, “He just... stood there.”

“Hmmm.” Hannibal looked thoughtful for a moment, bending down to lift Mikel into his arms and moving to follow Will into the woods. When he found Will, he shuffled a little closer, leaning over to whisper in his Alpha’s ear, “It looks like we might have found a silver lining here?”

“Oh?”

“Jack wants to find this copycat.” Hannibal’s eyes lowered to a blood stain on the ground, “I suggest we give it to him.”

Will’s eyes followed his, a sly smirk appearing on his face. “The girl was rude, wasn’t she? Swearing in front of a four-year-old.”

“Precisely.”

……

They reported the matter to the police, spreading those first seeds of interest in the strange man, before heading back to the motel.

Will really should have expected the nightmare, waking up in a cold sweat at the sight of Abigail Hobbs nearly severing his daughter's neck from her body over and over again.

"Will?"

"It's okay." Will whispered, hearing the TV blaring next door and the sofa bed creaking under Mikel, "I'm okay."

The bedside lamp flicked on as Hannibal scanned Will from head to toe, frowning in concern. "You're soaking wet." He whispered, "Sweating… do you feel ill?"

"No more than I usually do."

Hannibal frowned, "We really need to speak to a Doctor when we get back. I don't like that answer."

There was no point in arguing.

"Come on." Hannibal helped him to his feet, "Have a shower and I'll change the sheets."

"I'm sorry."

Hannibal gave him a gentle kiss, "There's never a need to apologise. What do we have planned today?"

"Jack is meeting up near the cabin, just in case Abigail told Mischa anything." Will rolled his eyes, "Can you stay with Mikel in the car. I really don't want him to be in that cabin… I don't want Mischa to see it either, but…." His voice trailed off.

“I know…. They have seen worse though.”

“… True.”

……..

“I want to go home.” Mikel whined, “Motina, you didn’t bring the Hobbit book with you!”

“Did I?” Hannibal had perfected the innocent tone, “Sorry little one, I’ll remember it next time.”

Will fought not to chuckle, hearing the lie in his omega’s voice. The smile soon vanished however, when they pulled up by the cabin. “Have fun keeping Mikel occupied.” He whispered to Hannibal, “Especially after you’ve forgotten his new favourite book.”

“I will have my revenge for this.” Hannibal whispered back, and honestly, Will looked forward to it.

“Come on.” Will gestured for Mischa to follow him out of the car, just as Jack did the same from his own car. Wrapping an arm around his daughters’ shoulders, Will steered her away from the FBI agent and towards the cabin, waiting for an officer to cut away the yellow tape, before they entered.

“It’s very… clean.” Mischa whispered, the wooden cabin reminding her of her Motina’s kitchen… not that she’d ever say that out loud.

“Yeah, they were good at cleaning up the evidence.” Jack grumbled, “She tell you anything about this place?”

Mischa shook her head, “She- I asked why she had a gun… she said something about hunting deer and then…” She trailed off, leaving the end of the sentence unfinished, knowing that she

didn’t really need to say the rest.

“She didn’t tell you anything else?” Jack pushed, groaning when Mischa shook her head.

She knew that there was no chance of them finding any part of those girls.

Hunters liked to use every part of their kill after all.

And unless he wanted the FBI to know that they were active, her parents did the same.

Moving closer to her Papa, she watched Jack start to pace the floor, muttering angrily to himself. She didn’t resist when Will pulled her slightly to the right, only for the older man to flinch.

“Papa?” She turned, watching as he wiped something away from his forehead, the movement catching Jack’s attention.

“Will, what’s wrong?”

“… Something’s wrong upstairs.” Will showed Jack his fingers, prompting Jack to rush up the stairs, letting out a loud curse at whatever he found.

Silently, Will gestured for Mischa to leave, which she was all too happy to do, rushing back to the car and climbing into the back seat as Hannibal turned to look at her, “Is everything okay?”

“Blood was dripping from the ceiling.” Mischa couldn’t help but feel a little thrill at what was happening, “You?”

“It was just a small gift.” Hannibal shrugged, “Just something to take Jack’s obsessive attention away from us.”

….....

“It’s the girl we saw yesterday.” Will stated matter-of-factly, staring at the impaled body.

His love did some truly inspired work sometimes.

“The girl that Mischa met.” Jack narrowed his eyes at Will, “You can’t keep saying this is a coincidence!”

“I’m saying you’re too narrow-minded.” Will sighed, “There was a man there yesterday… at the Hobbs home, watching it…. Almost admiring it.”

“Admiring the home of a murderer?”

“He looked familiar, so I looked him up.” Will paused, mostly for dramatic effect (Hannibal was a great teacher in them), “He was the copycat victim’s brother.”

“Her brother?!” Jack looked up at the body, “And this victim was there yesterday and saw him?”

“Threw a rock at him and everything.”

Jack hummed in thought, as Will fought keep the smile off of his face.

Got him.

NSFW Chapter

“Nicholas Boyle.” Jack stated, “Cassie Boyle’s brother.”

With his arm wrapped around Mischa’s shoulders, pulling her close, Will stared up at Jack. “I assume you have a point to this?”

“You think he might be the copycat.”

“I think… you should at the very least consider him to be a suspect.” Will looked over to see Fleming and Mikel playing near a nearby tree, oddly subdued as the Forensic trio emerged from the cabin, “It’s a better idea, than the current one you’re working on.”

Jack was about to snap something back, only to pause when Katz cleared her throat a little nervously.

“We found something in her mouth.” She whispered, “It seems like whoever attacked her might have grazed part of them on her teeth. There was definitely foreign tissue in there and possibly traces of blood there.”

“I thought you said that the copycat wouldn’t kill again this way?” Jack interrupted Katz, who rolled her eyes, glaring at Will, “That he was an intelligent psychopath, who wouldn’t dare to kill again in this way?!”

“Maybe they feel like challenging the FBI, or maybe I was just wrong.” Will sighed.

“Garret Jacob Hobbs never struck his victims, why would the copycat?”

“Hobbs also honoured every part of his victims from the look of it.” Will sighed, “That’s why this killer is just a copycat.”

“And you think that copycat killer is Nicholas Boyle.”

“I think he’d have an easier time of doing… what was done in there.” Will was so used to discussing the gritty details with his family, censoring himself was harder than usual, “And trust me, my daughter… my thirteen-year-old daughter, is not in contact with over twenty-year-olds. Have you ever thought that maybe Abigail Hobbs might be friends with him… maybe she knew him through Cassie Boyle?”

“You were wrong about the copycat, maybe you’re wrong about other things.”

“This little power play is over Jack.” Will sighed, getting to his feet and pulling Mischa up with him, “We’ve played your games, and now we’re going home. The copycat has left you their DNA, so now it’s up to you.”

“Stay for one evening.” Jack sighed, “Mischa… I’m going to need a DNA sample?”

Mischa looked over at him, deliberately widening her eyes just a little. “Why?”

“… Just in case.”

“If it’ll get you to leave her alone, then fine.” Will loved it when all these pieces fell into place, “But I want Katz to do it.”

“Deal.”

……..

The sobbing mother showed up at the Hobbs home at the same time as them, lead away by sympathetic police.

Mischa stood near the car, glancing inside every so often to see that her little brother was fast asleep, completely oblivious to the flashing lights and chaos that was going on outside.

She was a little bit jealous.

“Mischa?”

She looked up at her Motina, who reached out and pulled her closer.

“It’s okay.” He whispered, “It’ll all be over soon.”

Jack strode over to the pair of them, eyes glancing over Mischa, before he focused on Will, “I can’t convince you to stay for longer?”

“Have Katz, Price and Zeller have another go over the house.” Will’s voice was monotone, “We’ll stay for one more day, but then we’re going home, your investigation be damned.”

“… Fine.”

Jack moved away, as Will looked back over at the house, groaning when he saw Freddie Lounds heading straight for them.

“You are on the wrong side of the police line.” He snarled at her, pushing Mischa so that his daughter was standing behind him, as an officer quickly leapt to attention and grabbed Freddie’s arm, pulling her away.

“I can help!” Freddie complained, “I’ve been covering the Minnesota Strike long before your family got involved! I can help!”

Mischa looked away from her as she was pulled away.

“You’re not the only ones lurking around the Hobbs home, peering in through windows! You should really be more careful!”

Hannibal frowned at the words, moving forwards to ask her if she’d seen a young man hanging around, only to hear a plaintive little “Motina” coming from the car.

He turned to help Mikel, pushing Freddie from his mind.

……

“Will!” Hannibal moaned, feeling calloused hands roving over his flushed skin, kisses following that path.

“It was exactly the same.” Will whispered, “A perfect copycat crime. I love your work!”

Hannibal felt a little smug at the praise, feeling Will getting lower and lower, before the Alpha was suddenly taking Hannibal’s cock into his mouth, suckling lightly as he bobbed his head. Hannibal couldn’t help but moan in delight, one hand slapping over his mouth as he remembered that his children were only in the next room over, the Forensic Trio volunteering to keep the three children occupied for the evening, knowing that Hannibal and Will were both stressed out from Jack’s recent attention.

After a while, Will pulled his lips off Hannibal’s dick, watching it twitch as pre-cum dripped from the flushed head, down the shaft and onto the sheets below them.

“I have to have you.” He whispered, rubbing at Hannibal’s thigh, fingers slowly creeping closer to his ass.

“Anytime you want.” Hannibal knew he didn’t sound as calm as he wanted, watching Will stick two of his own fingers into his mouth, laving them with his own saliva, before moving them lower.

Hannibal gasped and exhaled, trying to stay as quiet as he could as those fingers slid slowly into him, curling, and stretching him out. His own hand crept around his front to stroke his cock in time with the light fingering.

“How would you like me darling?” He managed to pant out.

“Hmm… roll over.”

Smirking, Hannibal did as he was told, gasping when Will pushing him down into the sheets, warm face against the cool pillows, ass up in the air as Will rubbed the head of his dick against Hannibal’s hole.

“Got to be quiet now.” Will chuckled, sliding slowly inside as he gripped at Hannibal’s hips.

“P-Prašau.”

Will chuckled, loving it when he made Hannibal forget English, rolling his hips, before moving into the deep thrusts. Each jab had Hannibal biting at the pillow, the rubbing against his prostate pushing him closer and closer to the edge of euphoria.

It wasn’t long before Will’s pace became stuttered, leaning over Hannibal’s back to whisper in his ear.

“Come for me Hannibal… let me feel you…”

Hannibal buried his face in his pillow to muffle the moan, clenching his muscles around the younger man’s cock, his climax coursing through him as he collapsed into the sheets. Will

soon followed, pushing one, two, three more times into Hannibal, before coming deep inside him.

Both men panted hard as they regained themselves. Feeling a little overstimulated, Hannibal reached back to tap at Will, silently ordering him to pull out. Once he did, Hannibal rolled over, watching as Will went to get something to clean them up.

“I love you.” He whispered.

“I love you too Hannibal.”

……

//We had the Forensic trio have another look over the Hobbs residence. \\ Jack sighed over the phone, //There was human hair in the actual pillows… he really was using every part of them, wasn’t he? \\

“Nothing goes to waste.” Will sighed, looking over at a still sleeping Hannibal, admiring the bite marks that he’d left behind, “We’re still leaving tonight… but at least you’ve something to tell the families.”

//Yeah, as much good as it will do. \\

Will knew this, but what else could he do or say?

…….

In the other room, Mischa listened at the doorway. Once again, it was her and the two boys. Katz, Price and Zeller had reassured her that her parents were still in the room next door.

She wasn’t going to disturb them though, not after the look she’d seen Papa give her Motina.

Sighing, she continued to look through Netflix, hoping to find something suitable for them all to watch, occasionally glancing over at the two boys to make sure that they weren’t causing mischief.

Mikel was regaling Fleming with what they’d read of the Hobbit, so they were fine for the time being.

Distracted with them, she completely missed the person at the window.

Chapter 21

It was Hannibal who first sensed that something was wrong.

Will knew that many people scoffed at the ‘motherly omega instincts’, but obviously, those people had never met Hannibal.

When his omega shot up in bed, eyes darting towards the room next door, Will also leapt to attention.

“Hannibal?”

“… Something’s wrong.”

……..

With the boys having a ‘jumping’ competition, Mischa decided to step outside for a moment, keeping one hand on the motel wall at all times.

“Hey…”

She cursed her luck, flinching almost half a mile into the air as she turned to her right, seeing the man from yesterday staring back at her.

“… I’m not going to hurt you.”

Mischa felt like she couldn’t breathe, one hand moving into her hoodie pocket as she fingered the switchblade she’d hidden there.

Her parents didn't know about this.

She'd found it at school, when she was going through lockers as an after-school clean-up activity at the beginning of the year. When the old students left, there was always something left behind.

Including this.

"I-I just need you to listen to me." The man continued, "Your parents are in the FBI, you'll be able to tell them the truth!"

"… What truth?" She knew what he was going to say before he even said it.

"I didn't kill that girl! I didn't!"

Mischa stared at him for a moment, before moving to dart back into the motel, yelping when her arm was grabbed, and she was pinned against the wall.

"You have to tell them!" He yelled in her face, "You have to tell them that- "

His words were cut off as she shoved the blade right into his heart, feeling the blood starting to stain her hands.

……

Hannibal made it outside just in time to see his daughter remove the blade from Nicholas Boyle's chest, the body dropping from the ground.

“Mischa.”

She turned to him, an almost elated look on her face. “I did it.” She whispered, “My-my first kill!”

Hannibal looked through the motel window to see that the two younger children were still jumping on the bed, completely unaware of what was happening outside.

Mischa didn’t seem to remember that she wanted Abigail Hobbs to be her first, but that didn’t matter at the moment.

“Go inside and wash your hands like we taught you.” He instructed her, “But… get Will before you do.”

She nodded eagerly, beaming when Hannibal pressed a hand to the top of her head, giving it a gentle pat, “You did well.” He murmured to her, “But now, leave the rest to your Papa and me.”

……

Mikel was still distracting Fleming (even if he was unaware that he was doing so) when Will headed outside.

“She well and truly butchered him.” He stated, pride in his voice, “How was she?”

“Thrilled, as you’d imagine.” Hannibal replied, “That may fade when she remembers that she wanted Abigail to be her first.”

“She’ll get over it.” Will waved his hand dismissively, eyeing the body, “She got him right in the heart though… good girl.”

“A true natural… I was thinking that I should take her with me to get right of it.”

Will glanced over at him, “Mischa’s first kill and first body disposal?”

“It’s a Motina-daughter thing.”

“Of course.” Will leaned up to give him a kiss on the cheek, “I’ll go and get her.”

…….

Three hours later, it was like nothing had happened.

They’d faked an attack by Nicholas Boyle, the man only being chased off when Will shot at him.

“I managed to get him though.” Will sighed, “I know, I know… bringing a gun was stupid, but after what happened the last time… I wanted to be prepared.”

“I could arrest you for owning a gun without a license.” Jack pointed out, only to sigh wearily at the look on Will’s face, “But I suppose I can let it slide this once.” He looked down at the bloodstain on the ground, “You’ve helped with obtaining a DNA sample we can compare against the sample left in the second copycat victim.”

“I appreciate that Jack... I assume the sample you took from Mischa wasn’t a match?”

Jack shook his head, “It wasn’t, I- I apologise for pressing the issue with you.”

“Just... catch him, Jack.”

Will injected just the right amount of weariness into his face, for Jack to give him a sympathetic look.

“We will. I promise.” Jack looked around, “Where’s Mischa? And the boys?”

“Mischa is with Hannibal…. She was upset that someone was looking in through the window at her, so he’s taken her away from all this.” Will gestured vaguely all around, “And the boys are with Zeller for the moment. Just until we’re okay to leave.”

“Of course… this has probably all been very shocking to them.” Jack acted like he wasn’t the one who said Will and his family absolutely HAD to be here, “Once we get the all clear, you’ll all be free to go.” Jack then looked off into the distance, “He couldn’t have gotten very far if you shot him.”

“I think I only grazed him Jack… and I have no idea where I hit him.”

“Still… we’ll catch him soon. I can feel it!”

……..

“The DNA turned out to be a match.” Hannibal stated in his office, having just put down the phone, “For all rights and accounts, Nicholas Boyle is the copycat killer.” He glanced up to his balcony, still seeing the huddled figure of his daughter sitting there.

With Will taking Mikel to the bookstore (where Hannibal just knew he would probably buy the Lord of the Rings book trilogy as well), it was just him and Mischa in his office.

“The first time is always a little hard.” He placed his pen down, getting to his feet so that he could see her a little better.

“It’s not that.” She groaned, turning to peer through the banister rails at him, “I-I wanted everyone to see him! I wanted to show everyone what I’d done but… but instead we just buried him in the woods where he’ll probably never be found!”

“We did.” Hannibal agreed, “Do you want to know why?”

She nodded.

“Sometimes, it’s necessary. We want the FBI to focus on catching Nicholas Boyle, so they have to still believe that he’s alive and out there. If they knew that he was dead, it would be all to easy for Jack to turn his attention back to us.” Hannibal paused, watching Mischa thinking about it, “There are times for a show, and times to be hidden.”

“… And we had to be hidden then.”

“Exactly.” Hannibal stayed where he was, watching as she made her way down the ladder, “But… I think that I should be able to encourage Will to allow you on the next hunt… if only to watch.”

“Really?!”

“Really.” He moved closer, pressing a kiss to the top of her head, “Now… what should we cook for tonight?”

“… Stroganoff?”

“Mm, sounds like a delightful idea.”

Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

If i opened up a prompt series for this story, what would you guys think?

It had been over two months since the Nicholas Boyle incident, and Hannibal finally believed that they could relax.

It wasn't until he woke up alone in their Wolf Trap home, that he realised just how wrong he was.

"Will?" He slowly sat up, looking around, frowning when he saw that the bedroom light was on, "William?"

Silence.

Hannibal swore that if his husband had gone hunting without him, he was sleeping on the sofa for the foreseeable week. At least until Christmas.

Slowly, he got out of bed to check on the children, noticing that the living room light was on as well.

Mischa was fast asleep, a Sherlock Holmes book resting by her head. Ever since the Nicholas Boyle incident, she had been pouring over all the detective novels, wanting to learn all the techniques and outsmart the FBI, much like her parents.

He didn't have the heart to point out that life was very different from detective novels, not when she was enjoying them so much.

He then went to check on Mikel, making a mental note that they would need to buy some new pyjamas from him soon. He looked like they would be halfway up his legs and halfway down his arms if he stretched.

By the time he got back to the bedroom, he was stunned to see that Will was back, lying on his back on the bed.

“Sometimes I like to leave the lights on and walk away from the house.” He began, “Across the flat fields… and when I look back from a distance, the house looks like a boat out on the sea.”

“… Does it make you feel safe?”

Will flinched a little at the words, looking over at his husband. “It’s only been recently that I’ve felt… unnerved by everything.” He whispered, “It’s like- I feel like I’m always being watched recently. Like there’s a presence in the back of my mind that’s calling out for help.”

“You’ve… been a little off since the Hobbs case.” Hannibal placed the back of his hand on his mate’s forehead, frowning at the heat that he felt, “Do you think it’s… a side effect of being in his mind?”

“I’ve been in worse minds before… I am a worse mind.” Will snapped, “Why can’t I shake this?!”

There was something off about his scent.

Hannibal needed more time to think about this.

…….

They were having mushroom and ‘ham’ omelettes one morning when Will’s mobile started to ring. He looked over at the screen, and groaned, “It’s Jack.”

“Ignore it.” Hannibal sighed, “We’ve already done far too much for Jack recently.”

The phone fell silent, before starting right back up again.

“So…” Hannibal raised his voice slightly to be heard over the phone, “…Mischa, which Sherlock Holmes tale are you up to now?”

“The Reichenbach Falls.” She answered, “The final confrontation between Moriarty and Holmes.”

“Ah yes, I remember reading that myself when I was about your age.”

“When it first came out do you mean?”

Hannibal rolled his eyes, “I see someone doesn’t want any desert tonight?”

It was an empty threat, and they all knew it, as Mischa cackled in delight.

The scar on her neck had healed quite nicely, and was now just a thin, red line. She had stopped wearing the scarf, wearing the scar proudly, despite the offense it seemed to cause her classmates. Good, private school girls did not get into fights with serial killers, which was how Abigail was painting it. It made her look tougher and cooler than her being just an unfortunate victim.

There was a knocking at the door, making Hannibal groan.

All he wanted to do, wash finish this meal, send the children off to do their own thing as he slow danced with his Alpha.

However, it seemed like Jack was determined to ruin that.

“I’ll get it.” He sighed, pushing himself to his feet and heading towards the door, opening it up to see Jack standing there, “This really isn’t a good time Jack, I don’t suppose- “

Jack shouldered his way inside, as Hannibal looked up to the ceiling and counted to ten.

He couldn’t kill Jack yet.

They had to completely and totally humiliate him first… have him begging for death, before giving it to him.

Who just barged their way into someone’s house though?

“Jack.” he heard Will snap in the dining room, “I don’t work for you, remember?!”

“I need you in on this one. I have an entire family killed; Alpha, omega, and child... all shot at the dining room table, just like the one you’re sitting at right now.”

“Well, the only intruder we have to worry about here, is you.”

Hannibal entered the room, just in time to see Will glance thoughtfully over at their children, already knowing what Will was going to say.

Will had a weakness for children, that often out-weighed Hannibal’s own protectiveness at times.

“Fine….” Will sighed, “… But I’m only having a look at the crime scene, nothing more Jack!”

“Fine.”

……..

The food was rotting, as were the bodies.

Taking the seat at the head of the table, he rattled off his observations.

The murderer was the guest of honour, taking a seat at the head of the table. They’d brought their own ‘family’ to the gathering, controlling the Turners with threats of violence, so that everyone behaved.

There was an Alpha and an Omega, and two beta children.

It was different from his own family lay-out, Will had to remember that.

The threats turned to actions. The Alpha father, and the two beta children were executed simultaneously, leaving only the omega woman alive.

She was killed last…. A forgiving look in her eyes.

The person sitting at the head of the table did that themselves.

“What do you see Will?”

"… Family Values."

"Whose family?"

Will didn't have an answer for that.

……

Hannibal sighed as the dogs all clambered around his legs, desperate for the sausages he had just finished making.

"Behave." He warned them, seeing Cerberus join the group, "All of you."

With Mikel having a quick nap in the living room, Hannibal had seized on the opportunity to get some meal prep done before Will returned from the crime scene and Mischa returned from school.

He threw the dogs the occasional scrap of meat as he moved through the motions. Once they were sated, the dogs all headed back into the living room, taking various positions around a sleeping Mikel, with Cerberus and Winston taking pride of place next to the small child.

It was a warming sight to know just how protective their pack of dogs were of the family.

Satisfied that everything was well in this room, Hannibal headed into William's work room, examining the beautiful fishing lures there, before leaving again.

He had to remember to save some more parts from their next victim for future use in them.

…….

“So, they were childhood sweethearts.” Jack reported as they examined the crime scene, “As soon as they presented, they made plans to get mated and married. The Alpha, Roger Turner owns a successful real estate company, they are pillars of the community!”

“The child… in this photo.”

“Hm, they had two beta children and one omega son… he went missing about a year ago. Last known sighting had him boarding an RV at a rest-stop on Route 47. Possible runaway, probable abduction.”

“Or both.” Will sighed, “Did they have a look at sex trafficking during the original investigation?”

“They did but found nothing to suggest it.” Jack sighed, “When misery rains, it pours.”

“False faces in family portraits.” Will mused idly to himself, “Layers and layers of lies, betrayed by the sad glint in a child’s eyes.” He turned to Jack, “Did you know that Omegian children make up over half of all runaway cases every year? Even when it’s an Alpha/Omega parent pairing, many parents aren’t ready for having an omega child, and children are very sensitive to those sorts of things.”

“… Not a problem you and your husband have I assume.”

“Hannibal and I aren’t your typical alpha/omega couple.” Will shrugged, “The lack of willingness to look outside the box is probably what leads to a lot of runaways… the need to make the Alpha the strong protector, and the Omega the gentle carer. Betas are easier usually.

Jack cleared his throat a little uncomfortably, “Any signs of a forced entry.”

“No broken windows or torn screens.” Katz reported, “It’s all sealed up tight.”

“Hm, they probably rang the front door.”

As Katz went through bullet hole placements, Will turned his attention back to the family pictures.

They had so many similar ones at home.

A photo of him and Mischa after their first fishing trip together, the autumn sun glistening off the scales of the fish. She was about 5.

Her proudly holding a first-place win at a science fair, with her very detailed planet model, aged eight. Hannibal was standing behind her, visibly pregnant at this point.

Mikel’s first baby picture, cradled in Mischa’s arms as she stared at him in wonder.

The first Halloween with all four of them dressed up as Doctor Who characters (Mischa’s idea, going through a phase as she was).

Pictures upon pictures lined the walls… but were they really happy in all of them?

Will liked to think so.

Moving over to the side table, he focused on one particular picture, the mother cuddling up to her omega son on the sofa, kissing his forehead as the child laughed. Tuning back into the conversation, hearing the idea that the shooter might have been crouching down.

“How long ago was Jesse taken?”

“A little over a year ago.”

And then a horrible thought occurred to Will.

What if the shooter wasn’t crouching… but was in fact, a child?

Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

> Okay, so i'm opening up a prompt series where the lovely readers of this work can ask for what they want to see from this series. Some tidbits i will be covering in the main story, so i'll have to decline them to avoid spoilers, but aside from that, go nuts!

“A child killer?” Hannibal mused, as he stared off into the distance, “Not impossible, as I'm sure you’re more than aware of.”

//” I’m aware. \\ Will sighed over the phone, //” I’m trying not to think about it too much... what child would kill their seemingly happy family, unless there was something going on behind the scenes.” \\

“Again, it’s not unlikely.”

//” Hm... so, what are we learning about today?” \\

“Myths and legends...specifically Arthur and his knights of the round table.”

//” Not El Dorado, or Atlantis?” \\

“Maybe another time.” Hannibal chuckled, “I’m hoping that he’ll forget all about this Hobbit and Lord of the Rings nonsense and want to read some Arthurian tales instead.”

// “Tolkien knew thirty-five different languages, both ancient and modern. \\ Will chuckled, // “Old Norse, Lithuanian… he created fifteen different, Elvish dialects, along with languages for the other races. The Dwarves have a separate sign language, because of the loud forges.” \\

“Will…”

// “If he’d had his way, he wouldn’t have written the books in English at all…. Two of those created languages have enough words and grammar to be considered functional.” \\

Hannibal chuckled, “Alright, alright… I will stop offending your sensibilities regarding his works, but do not expect me to like them.”

// “Heaven forbid!” \\

“Aš tave myliu.”

// “Aš irgi tave myliu” \\

He hung up the phone, only for it to start ringing again almost immediately. He vaguely recognised the number as that of belonging to Mischa’s school.

“Hello?” He began, picking it up.

// “Doctor Lector, it’s Principal Hamilton from The Bryn Mawr School.” \\

“Hello, what can I do for you?”

// “We’ve had an incident today… not to worry, Mischa is in no trouble as the incident was clearly started by others but- but we were hoping that you would come and possibly take her home for the day?” \\

“Of course. I assume I’ll get the full story once there?”

// “Yes Doctor.” \\

……

Mischa had been admiring the scar in the mirror when the girls came into the bathroom. No, she didn’t hide it, but that didn’t mean that she didn’t hate that it had happened to her in the first place.

Apparently, it was the wrong attitude to take.

Pressing the tissue against her split lip, Mischa lifted her head as her Motina strode into the room, eyes flashing dangerously when he saw the mark on her face and the bloodied knuckles on her hand. She could vaguely hear Mikel playing outside the office, distracted by the receptionist.

“What happened?” There was very little trace of the usually welcoming omega Doctor in his voice, standing behind Mischa as his hands gripped the back of her chair.

“An altercation.”

“Yes, I can see that.” Hannibal stated, his tone revealing just how much of an idiot he thought the Principal was being in saying that “What specifically happened.”

“Mischa was in the bathrooms over the first break, when a group of her classmates… set upon her, so to speak.” Principal Hamilton sighed, “They’ve all admitted to it, and they will be punished Doctor Lector, I swear.”

They looked worse than her, Mischa thought to herself privately.

“Did they give a reason for the assault?”

“Assault, Doctor Lector, please!” Principal Hamilton looked panicked at the thought, “It was just- “

“- A group of girls ganging up on one single girl… what would you call it?”

Principal Hamilton didn’t have the words to answer that.

“I hope that the punishment is severe.” Hannibal stated, “I would hate to have to pull my daughter out of school due to concerns about her safety.”

Along with her tuition fee and additional donations.

“They will be punished harshly for these actions.” The Principal’s voice was firmer now, “You have my word Doctor Lector.”

“Good.” Hannibal placed his hands on Mischa’s shoulders, “I presume I can take her home for the day?”

“Yes, yes! Of course!”

They left the office, waiting until they were all in the car before Hannibal asked the important question.

“So… did they decide to confess of their own free will?”

“No… not exactly.”

“Good girl.”

……..

A couple of hours later, as Mischa worked on her homework, and Mikel played with Cerberus, there was a knock on the office door.

Slowly, Hannibal got to his feet and headed over to the door, opening it up to see Alana standing there.

“Hey.”

He gave her a mock frown, stalling a little as he heard Mikel running over to Mischa, “Do you have an appointment?”

“Do you have a beer?”

He chuckled, moving to one side to let her in. “Of course. Would you two like something to drink as well?”

“Orange juice please Motina.” Mikel piped up, Cerberus in his arms as he peered out at Alana. Mischa was also keeping her eyes on the Doctor.

“Wine?”

“Nice try young lady.” Hannibal chuckled, “I do have some apple and mango juice if you wish?”

“Yeah, alright.”

Hannibal went to fetch the beer, the two juices and a small glass of wine, placing a tray on the table as Alana went to sit on the sofa, her eyes darting over to Mischa.

“That looks like a nasty cut on your lip.” She gently pointed out.

“She had a spot of trouble with bullying.” Hannibal interjected, “A problem that the school will hopefully deal with.”

“Of course.” Alana cleared her throat, “I hope you’re… okay with everything else that has happened?”

Mischa just looked away, one hand reaching up to rub at the scar on her neck.

“We’re working on it.” Hannibal sighed, looking away so as to hide his expression from the other psychiatrist.

Manipulation is a delicate art....and his daughter was mastering it.

….....

“I’m glad we didn’t have guns in our house… I think I would have shot my sisters just to get them out of the bathroom.”

Will barely heard them, eyes still on the little bodies of the poor beta children. He vaguely heard Katz saying something about having a big family, and Price having a twin, before Zeller was turning to him.

“Let me guess… only child?”

Will nodded. His mother had left his father when she himself was only five years old, letting his father raise him alone. His father never remarried or mated with someone else, unwilling to break that bonding mark.

His never faded, so they had to assume that Will’s mother hadn’t broken it on her end either.

“I thought so.” Zeller gave him a soft smirk, “Most usual Alphas and Omegas develop traditional personality traits through family dynamics. Older siblings are usually Alphas, so they develop protective instincts. Omegas are usually the younger ones, so they’re raised cared for and wanting for nothing…. You’re an only child… so you took on unusual personality traits, for an Alpha anyway.”

“Not that it’s a bad thing.” Price piped up, “We’re not intending on giving Fleming a sibling, god knows, he’s hard work enough. Isn’t it enough that they’re just good human beings?”

Jack frowned down at where he was staring down at one of the children’s bodies… the oldest.

“The oldest child has all the responsibilities piled on them, preparing them for success.” Jack stated, “Alphas usually take on leadership roles, whereas omegas are prepared for running a household. The youngest children get away with everything… I’ve found it usually leads to criminal difficulties in Alphas and spoiled omegas.”

They were generalisations that Will fervently disagreed with, opening his mouth, only to see Katz shaking her head at him from the side-lines.

It was a battle for another time.

“What about middle children? Aren’t they the issues?” Price tried to change the subject, “Middle child syndrome and all that?”

“Nah, middle’s the sweet spot.”

“Always trying to figure out where they fit in.” Will muttered, “They make great politicians… or lousy ones.”

“I don’t suppose you and Hannibal- “

“- No.”

Will knew that there would be no more children in their future. Not with how difficult the last one had been. He could still remember Hannibal lying on his bed, exhausted after the labour, looking over at Will and apologising for thinking that he wouldn’t be able to go through this again.

“All of them have defensive wounds, except for the mother.” Jack pointed out, bringing it back to their case, as Will thought back to the final victim, picking up the crime scene photo of her body.

“There was… forgiveness.”

“What kind of victim forgives their murderer?!”

“…A mother.”

Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Prompts welcome! :)

“It’s a tough one.” Will sighed “There’s something... different about it. Something I can’t put my finger on right now.”

Hannibal looked over at him, from where he was preparing the quail, that he was going to stuff with the figs and the prosciutto. “I… imagine it’s brought up a few feelings about your mother?”

“That’s some lazy psychiatry Doctor Lector.”

When Hannibal remained silent, Will sighed, moving over to lean on the countertop, hearing Mischa’s music playing faintly above them, and Mikel humming a completely different tune in the living room as he sat with the dogs, rolling their balls to them, in a slightly less exciting form of fetch.

“Our children are lucky to have a mother like you.” He eventually spoke up, “… My mother is difficult to reach, so to speak. An omega who popped out a child with an Alpha who was, by all rights and accounts, a good man… and left less than a week later.” He shrugged, “I never knew her, and my Dad had to take on the Alpha and Omega role… probably why I’m not the typical Alpha.”

“You know I’ve never minded that.” Hannibal chuckled, carefully placing the stuffed quails onto the roasting tray, “They are lucky to have a father like you as well, you know.”

Will just nodded, watching as his omega bustled around the kitchen.

He knew Hannibal's story.

Hannibal had lost both of his parents at a very young age, younger than Mischa was now. A scared omega boy sent to a local orphanage, remaining silent despite all the verbal abuse he received…. Traumatised at the hands of monsters who left him alone in the world.

His own sister, Mischa, didn't even make it to Mikel's age.

He was adopted by his Alpha uncle, Robert when he was in his late teens, and taught how to act in upper class society.

A very different life from the one Will had led.

"When you first started out as the Ripper… did you ever think you would have a family?"

Placing the tray into the oven, Hannibal hummed thoughtfully, "I thought about it, as all omegas do when teachers are talking about the natural progression of life... but I was too consumed with the thoughts of revenge to think about seriously." He looked over at Will, "And then I met you."

Warmth settled into the pit of his heart at that quiet statement.

"Family always seemed like such a foreign concept before I met you." Wil replied, just as softly, "And now look at us."

"Now look at us." Hannibal chuckled, before changing the subject, "Tell me about the Turner family. Were they affluent? Well-to-do?"

"They lived like they had money." Will looked up at the ceiling, "That's another thing I'm grateful for… our children never had to live like I did, following my father from boatyard to boatyard all across the country. Always the new boy at school… always the stranger."

Hannibal sort of knew what that felt like, remembering his first meeting with children his age after being adopted by his uncle. He referred to them as children because… well, that's what they seemed like to him, despite them all being at least sixteen.

"What grudge did our murderer have against Mrs Turner?"

"…Motherhood."

"Or… some sort of perversion of it."

Will nodded, staring off into the distance again.

"I was thinking about inviting our 'friend' Jack around for dinner again." Hannibal stated, "I know these… invitations are probably what are giving him 'permission' to keep asking for your help, but they're also keeping him on our side."

"If you think it's for the best." Will leant over, kissing him on the cheek, "I'll set the table and tell the children to clean up."

"Make sure Mikel cleans his hands thoroughly if he's been playing with the dogs."

"I will…. And don't think I didn't see that Three Musketeers book you were sneaking into Mikel's room!"

"You were meant to see it."

……..

“A modified Boudin Noir…” Hannibal placed the plates on the table, “… from Ali Bab's Gastronomie Practique.” He waited until the children started eating, before turning to Jack, “You promised to deliver your wife to my dinner table.”

Will hid his smile behind his glass, which Jack thankfully, didn’t seem to notice.

“You’ve got to give us a chance to polish up our act. We can’t have you two making our marriage look bad after all.”

Hannibal would take that compliment.

Him and Will were perfect for each other after all.

No other marriages could ever compare to theirs.

“So, what am I about to put in my mouth?” Jack asked.

“Rabbit.”

“Hm, he should have hopped faster.”

Mischa couldn’t contain the little snort of laughter, remembering her Papa chasing the rude hunter down. The one who thought he could spout a bunch of sexist commentary about female hunters.

“Yes.” Hannibal looked just as amused, “He should have, but fortunately, he did not.”

They continued to eat for a moment, before turning his attentions to Will. “Are you alright?” He asked, attempting some semblance of concern, “You seem… quiet.”

“It’s a hard case.”

“Children killing children isn’t new to- “

“- Please, not at the dinner table.” Hannibal played the concerned omega to a T, sending a significant glance over at Mikel (who of course, was oblivious), “There is a time and a place for this sort of talk, and I would prefer my children to remain children for as long as possible.”

Jack opened his mouth to say something, only to stop and turn his attention back to his food. With Jack’s eyes on the dish, Will glanced up at Hannibal and smirked.

‘Nicely done.’

……

Jack left, and Will went to let the dogs out the back so that they could do their business. He could vaguely hear the TV, where Mischa had reluctantly agreed to watch a film with Mikel.

Hannibal was prepping what would be needed for breakfast tomorrow, his silhouette seen in the light of the kitchen window, his movements fluid and graceful.

This was his family….and he was never so grateful to have it.

Chapter 25

Chapter Summary

Prompts are open :)

“What are you drawing?”

“A dragon.” Mikel muttered, biting at the end of the ren felt tip, before remembering his Motina’s gentle scolding’s about that particular habit, “Like Smaug.”

Will couldn’t stop the triumphant smile from appearing on his face.

He was going to win this battle.

“It looks amazing.” He praised, chuckling when the four-year-old beamed up at him, “Are you going to show Motina when we get home?”

“Yep!”

That guaranteed a fun night for Will.

With Hannibal spending the day with Mischa, it was up to Will to take care of Mikel for the day, and he never said no to that.

He felt like he didn’t spend as much time with Mikel, as he did with Mischa.

“What’s your dragon doing?”

“Eating people who are trying to steal her treasure.”

“Best way to stop thieves.” Will agreed, turning his attention to the counter as a customer entered the store, seeing that it was a regular.

“The boat playing up again?”

“Yep, wife keeps saying I need to sell it for scrap, but you always make it run so smoothly and I can’t bare to part with it.”

“Let’s see what we can do.”

……

“You’re a miracle worker!”

Will pushed himself back to his feet, glancing over to see Mikel still playing his little horse-riding game, waving a stick around as he rode into battle. “I do my best Mister Brannan… you might need to think about investing in a new engine soon though. I can only do so much?”

“Think you can keep an eye open for something cheap for me?”

“I promise.”

“Good man.”

Hearing a car suddenly approaching, Will looked up sharply, darting forwards to grab Mikel. No, the car wasn't really anywhere close, but Will wasn't taking that chance as Mister Brannan straightened up indignantly.

"You could have hit someone driving that speed!" He shouted, as Agent Crawford exited the car.

Before Jack could pull out his badge, Will turned to his customer wearily. "Can I call you and get the balance later this evening? I sense this one isn't going to want to wait."

"Do you need me to stay?" Mister Brannan eyed Jack suspiciously, "Just in case."

"No, he's harmless. A pain, but harmless."

Mister Brannan nodded and left, as Jack stormed over.

"You make it difficult to earn a living Jack." Will sighed, placing Mikel back on the ground so that he could continue playing now that the risk of getting run over had passed.

"We found a match for one set of prints found in the Turner home… a thirteen-year-old omega boy from West Virginia called Connor Frist."

"We suspected that another child was involved."

"Another missing child… he went missing around 10 months ago, and it was never solved."

"How many children are in the Frist family?"

“Three… just like with the Turners. Two betas and an omega.” Jack turned to his car, “We’re ready to go when you are, and you’re ready to go now, so let’s- “

“- I’m not ready.” Will groaned, “In case it escaped your attention Jack, Mikel is with me and I’m still technically running the shop.”

“So give Mikel back to Doctor Lecter and close up! We need to go!”

“You speak like you’re expecting a crime scene.”

“I am.”

…….

//” I am sorry you know.” \\

Hannibal sighed, watching as Mischa put on the catchiest, most annoying pop tune that she could, dancing to try and keep Mikel distracted from the fact that he wasn’t going to be spending the day with his Papa, “It’s not your fault. You are technically saving lives.”

//” There was a good reason that I decided not to take that FBI job, and this was one of them.” \\ Will sounded totally and completely fed up, //” At this point, there had better be a crime scene.” \\

Chuckling fondly, Hannibal shook his head, “Well, tell Jack that you had better be home in time for tea.”

//” What are we having?” \\

“On our subjects of mothers and guardians the other evening, I decided to try a dish that my Aunt once had made for us. Miso salmon with soba noodles and ponzu dressing.”

//” I will be home, no matter what.” \\

“Good boy.”

……..

The house was decorated for Christmas (which Will reminded himself that they had to do at some point), the family lying dead in the living room.

The smell of burning flesh had made everyone else retch, as Will wrinkled his nose.

They were too late.

……..

“Mister Frist and the children killed first, and Mrs Frist killed last. Same as the Turners.”

“Not exactly.” Will sighed, “Something went wrong.”

Katz nodded, “There wasn’t a single present under the tree for Mrs Frist.”

“So, they took her presents… why?”

None of them had an answer for that, discussing how the mother was shot twice. The first shot would have sent her into convulsions without killing her, and the second was a mercy shot from another gun.

“So, who is our mystery corpse in the fireplace?”

“Conner Frist.” Will answered, “If I had to guess. He’d been prepared to shoot his mother, not watch her suffer.”

“He couldn’t put the panic back in the bottle and was shot as well.”

“Whoever shot him… disowned him.”

……..

“Five more minutes Motina, please!” Mikel pleaded, running through the living room, Cerberus running behind him, barking in excitement as Will entered the home.

“You said that ten minutes ago!” Hannibal followed on after the four-year-old and puppy, still wearing his apron from meal preparation.

Mikel spotted Will, and rushed over, clinging onto his Papa’s leg as Will shut the door behind him.

“Does someone not want to sit nicely at the table tonight?”

“He is… excitable.” Hannibal sighed, “But Santa will not be pleased if you continue on like this.”

Mikel looked up at Will, who nodded in agreement, keeping his face stern. “That’s right. You have time to play after dinner, and your Motina spent all that time making this. Do you really want to hurt his feelings by not eating it when it’s nice and warm?”

“… Sorry Motina.”

“It is alright mažasis.” Hannibal chuckled, “Go and wash your hands, okay?”

As Mikel rushed over, Hannibal turned to Will and pulled him into his arms for a hug, “What’s on your mind?”

“We need to think about getting the Christmas decorations up soon.”

Hannibal clearly wasn’t expecting that, pulling away slightly and frowning. “I’m sorry?”

“No, no, I’m sorry.” Will sighed, “The crime scene… they had their decorations up and it was easier to focus on that than everything else. Besides, you’ll be wanting to host one of your big get-togethers, won’t you?”

“I was hoping to have one in a couple of weeks.” Hannibal chuckled, “It’s rare for you to bring it up though. Usually, you avoid the subject at all costs?”

“I know how much you enjoy it, and if it makes you happy then….” Will shrugged, trying not to smirk when Hannibal narrowed his eyes thoughtfully at him.

“… You think that you’re going to win this perceived battle between LOTR and classic literature, don’t you, and this is your way of soothing the wounds.”

“And that’s why you’re the psychiatrist.”

“We shall see William, we will see.”

Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Psst... oneshots story is up :)

https://archiveofourown.org/works/38812728/chapters/97052178

Prompts are welcome :)

“Ever heard of Willard Wigan?”

Will continued to stare at the phone, not even noticing Katz striding towards him, Fleming bouncing on behind her.

“-He’s an artist that does micro-sculptures!” Fleming piped up, as Katz nodded.

“Yeah, like putting the president in the eye of a needle.” Katz chuckled, “He’s so focused, that he can work in between beats of his heart. I guess archers do the same, right?” She took a seat next to him, “What are you thinking about?”

Will glanced significantly over at Fleming, prompting Katz to make a shoo gesture at the four-year-old, waiting until he bounded down the corridor, before turning back to Will, “What’s got your focus then?”

“The boys who were taken… small, possibly a little underweight for their heights.”

“Do you think there’s a connection… or is your brain focusing on the similarities between them and Mikel.”

It was true that Mikel was slightly underweight for his age, but nothing that called for concern. He ran around with the dogs a lot, and no matter how much Hannibal put on his plate, he always finished it and it never seemed to go anywhere.

"Mikel is outside of the preferred age group." Will answered, "And our family doesn't fit the profile. No, I was thinking that there may be possibly ADHD diagnosis for the boys. The medication can suppress appetite and stunt long-term growth in children."

"…Willard Wigan also had a lonely childhood. He used his tiny figures as an escape."

"Who's Willard Wigan?"

Katz shook her head and laughed, "Price got a hit from the ballistics matching program he's been running on the two family murders. The bullet used to put Mrs Frist out of her misery, matches three from a murder in Bangor Main a year ago. The mother of a thirteen-year-old boy shot and killed with her own gun."

"Thirteen-year-old milk carton material."

……..

"C.J Lincoln went missing six months before his mother's murder and hasn't been seen since." Jack reported, "Apparently it wasn't long after his first heat, according to the police report. They thought it might be related to sex trafficking because of it."

"He has none of the characteristics of a sadist or a sociopath."

"No shoplifting." Jack agreed, "No malicious destruction of property, no assault, no battery. He was kind to animals for God's sake, the perfect omega!"

It was odd what society considered to be the perfect omega.

“Well, the firearm says we’re looking at the Peter Pan to our Lost Boys.” Will sighed, as Jack instantly protested.

“It takes a sophisticated level of manipulation to convince young boys, young omega children, to kill their families.”

He knew that they would be having a completely different conversation if the kid had had his first rut instead of his first heat.

He’d be considered to be the next Ted Bundy and that would be that.

A dangerous omega?

Never.

The thought made Will smirk.

If they only knew.

“Kindness to animals doesn’t suggest that kind of sophistication.” Will backed Jack up, knowing that the more he could push Jack into believing that omega killers were too rare to even really consider, the less attention would ever fall on Hannibal if the time ever came.

“But…” Jack leaned in, “… he is older, he’s been out in the world. Maybe he picked up a few things.”

……..

“Motina?! Papa?!”

Will groaned softly, wanting nothing more than to roll over, pull his pillow over his head and go back to sleep.

He’d been having trouble sleeping recently, and he was not impressed at being woken up like this.

“I’ve got him.” He vaguely heard Hannibal mutter, hearing the omega grab his dressing gown from the back of the door and leave the room.

Will felt a little guilty, especially after having surprised Hannibal with Mikel earlier that day. He promised himself to make it up to his omega by taking on parenting duties for the next two days… but he was grateful for the sleep now.

Except that he couldn’t go back to sleep.

Groaning, he looked up at the ceiling and cursed, hearing Hannibal dealing with Mikel in the next room over.

When Hannibal returned, it was almost an hour later.

“Mikel had a little accident.” He whispered, “I’ve changed the sheets and his pyjamas and put them in the machine.”

“Little bladders and all that.” Will sighed, “I’ll do the washing tomorrow.”

There was a moment of silence, before Hannibal climbed back into bed, “Do you want to talk about it?”

Silence.

“Will?”

“…Do we have all the presents for the children?”

A little taken aback by the change in subject, Hannibal nodded slowly. “I believe so… I think Chiyoh is sending something through for them as well.”

“To your office?”

“Yes.” Hannibal reached out and took Will’s hand into his own, “Are you okay?”

There was another beat of silence, before Will leant over, resting his head against Hannibal’s shoulder, “It’s all getting too close.” He whispered, “It’s all getting too… personal. With every case that I take, I feel like it links back to us in some way.”

“We do not fit the victim profile of this current killer or killers.” Hannibal gently reminded him, “There is no threat to us. What else is worrying you?”

“… I can’t help those boys. Even when I find them, I can’t give them what they gave up so freely!”

“Family.”

“Hm, we’re calling them the Lost Boys.”

“How very… much like the FBI. They do like giving names to their killers, don’t they?”

Will chuckled, “Don’t pretend that you don’t like being known at the Chesapeake Ripper.”

“Alright, I won’t.” Hannibal pressed a kiss to the side of Will’s head, “Come, let us get some sleep.”

…….

“Did Mikel have a bad dream last night?” Mischa asked, watching the flower bloom in the tea pot as the hot water turned a light brown.

“Only a small one.” Hannibal admitted, cutting at the peeled potatoes, “Nothing of much concern, just the usual four-year-old nightmares.”

“… No dragons then?”

“Alas no.” Hannibal chuckled, “That would have been quite convenient.” He glanced up at her, “Do not forget to iron out your uniform today.”

There was a groan that reminded Hannibal just how like Will his daughter was, followed by a weary “okay.”

“Good. Now, pour us some tea and let’s finish breakfast.”

“Yes Motina.”

…….

The sausages and the egg muffins were sizzling in the pain when Mikel finally entered the kitchen, hair sticking up in all directions. “Motina.” He still sounded exhausted, “Sleepy Motina.”

“I know darling.” Hannibal whispered, lifting the toddler up into his arms for a gentle hug, before letting him sit on the counter, “You’ve had a hard night, so I’ve made some blood sausages some high life eggs?”

“And fruit?”

“I’m sure if you ask Mischa, she will cut you up some orange for you.”

Mikel turned to Mischa, who crumbled instantly. How could she not when her little brother was so tired, he looked like he was one the verge of tears?

“Alright.” She sighed, “Alright, I’ll cut up some orange for you.” She moved over to the opposite counter, turning just in time to see her Motina throw a potato up into the air, before catching it on the blade of the knife, mock bowing when Mikel clapped his hands in excitement.

……

“Without the interference of a leader, none of these kids would ever contemplate violence.” Alana stated, looking through the files.

“Our missing kid’s a boy, probably omega as well…” Will muttered, “… a paradox in an otherwise normal family, an outcast who doesn’t look like it. He probably has a vocation… something mechanical or engineering.”

They all shifted through the files to try and find the next target.

“Why do you think these kids are susceptible to C.J Lincoln?” Alana asked.

“Because our boy may have a brother, but there ages or their interests or their secondary interests keep them apart. So he’s a brother without a brother.”

“Brothers looking for a mother…” Alana whispered, “… They kill the mothers last.”

“…She wants them to love her, with their entire souls… but they have to erase their families first.”

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

Prompts for the oneshots are open :)

Hannibal moved from counter to counter as he prepared the evening meal.

The villain had been caught. A sterile omega woman who wanted a family, and knew exactly how to get it, and now Will was coming home.

And Alana had invited herself to dinner.

Shockingly rude behaviour, but so long as she kept her opinions to herself, he was willing to put up with her for the time being.

“Love is like a tree….” He recited from one of his favourite stories, Hunchback of Notre Dame, as Mikel listened on at the table, “… it grows by itself, roots itself deeply in our being and continues to flourish over a heart in ruin. The inexplicable fact is that the blinder it is, the more tenacious it is. It is never stronger than when it is completely unreasonable.”

“Motina?”

“Hmm?”

“You and papa love each other, right?”

“We do, more than life itself sometimes.” Hannibal never believed in being shy about these feelings with his children, not when they might experience it one day themselves, “Why do

you ask?”

Mikel shrugged, fingers tracing patterns into the table as Hannibal decided to let it go.

If Mikel wanted to speak to him, he would in due time.

“If I give you the cutlery, can you please set them out all nice and neat?”

“Yes Motina!”

“Remember, try not to leave any smudges on them.”

“I know.”

….....

Alana and Will arrived less than half an hour later, and Hannibal fought not to tense when he saw just how close Alana was to HIS husband.

She had never shown the slightest interest in Will before.

But as soon as she knew that he was off limits, here she was, inviting herself to dinner and doing… this.

He looked over to the stairs to see Mischa standing there, looking just as disgusted at what she saw.

“Hello.” Alana greeted them all, “Thank you so much for having me.”

“Of course… our pleasure.” Hannibal went to finish off the final touches to the meal, “I assume the case is over and done with?”

“Yes.” Will sighed, “Not exactly the happiest of endings, but another family was saved.”

“I don’t suppose it’s too much to ask that Jack will leave us alone now?”

Will gave him a look that indicated just how ridiculous that suggestion was, making Hannibal sigh. “Everyone wash your hands.” He gently ordered, “I will dish up.”

He looked over at the table, trying not to flinch at the uneven layout. It was a problem that he had whenever Jack came to eat. Usually, he and Will sat at with either end of the table, with Mischa on one side and Mikel on the other. With five people though, Mischa and Mikel sat side by side, whilst the guest sat opposite, and it threw Hannibal off slightly.

It was a tiny fixation of his, one he knew was slightly irrational.

Still.

“We’re having breakfast for tea.” Mikel solemnly reported to his Papa and Alana.

“Oh?” Will cast an amused look over at Hannibal, who shrugged.

“I decided that we needed to have a lazy day today.”

Alana shook her head in amazement as she took her seat at the table, “Even your definition of lazy is more extravagant than most hotels who serve breakfast.” She pointed out, as Hannibal

poured her a glass of orange juice.

“I have two growing children. I like to make sure they have plenty of selection.”

Alana had no response for that, watching as everyone started to serve themselves, taking in the different conversations that were happening.

Mischa talking to Hannibal about taking up violin lessons at her school.

Mikel talking to Will about the Hunchback of Notre Dame, which Hannibal had apparently been telling him the story of (not what she would call appropriate, but maybe that was just her).

Will and Hannibal sending each other adoring looks over the table.

It was a picturesque family scene.

And she couldn’t help but feel a little jealous of it all.

……

“Čiūčia liūlia dukrytėla….” Hannibal hummed softly, rocking back and forth to try and soothe Mikel “… Mano mylimoji.” He softly grazed a finger over that tiny face, silently suggesting he close his eyes and go to sleep, as he lowered the toddler into bed.

He continued the lullaby, watching Mikel’s chest moving up and down, breathing getting heavier as he slowly fell asleep. Once he was sure that Mikel was well gone, he slowly left the room, switching the light off, before checking that all the dogs were settled and heading to the master bedroom.

Will was already curled up in bed, staring up at the ceiling with a vacant look on his eyes.

“Alana seemed... distracted at dinner.” Hannibal ventured, breaking the silence in the room, as he got changed. Whilst there was still some time before he would actually fall asleep, wanting to make sure Mischa was settled for the night, there was no reason why he couldn’t be comfortable.

“Did she?” Will asked, voice barely above a whisper.

“You didn’t notice?”

“I had other things on my mind.” Will sighed, “Sorry, it’s just... it’s been a long day.”

“I understand.” Leaning over, Hannibal pressed a quick kiss to his beloved’s cheek, “Jack has been… rather over-eager in seeking out your help.”

Will scoffed. “That’s putting it politely.”

“Hmmm.” Hannibal ran his fingers down Will’s chest, “Maybe you need a little bit of an… outlet for your frustration.”

There was a pause, as Will rolled over, scanning Hannibal up and down, before a sly smirk appeared on his face. “Are we feeling in a bit of a rough mood?”

“You know me so well.”

…….

“Oh God, W-Will please!” Hannibal whined, feeling his Alpha repeatedly slamming into him.

“Sshh.” Will snarled, stilling his hips to yank at Hannibal’s hair, “We don’t want to let Mischa know what’s happening, do we?”

“N-No.”

“No what?”

“No, A-Alpha!”

The snapping of Will’s hips resumed, and Hannibal let himself be lost in the sensation, feeling Will’s nails digging into his hips so hard that they threatened to break skin.

He was so glad that they still had a healthy sex life, despite having two children.

Feeling wrecked, he buried his face into the pillow, feeling Will’s knot swelling bigger inside of him. He wondered if Will’s eyes were fixated on the claiming mark on Hannibal’s neck. He wondered whether Will would bite over it, making sure everyone could see it.

Making sure Alana could see it.

Pace slowing, but knot still swelling, Will leaned in to rest his nose at Hannibal’s shoulder, drinking in the scent of his omega’s arousal. Feeling practically drunk on it, he bit at the mark, making Hannibal yelp into the pillow.

“Yessss.” Hannibal hissed, wriggling a little to encourage Will to bite a little harder until he could smell the blood.

Once that taste filled Will's mouth, he let go, licking at the blood before it could drip onto the sheets, rocking his hips as his knot continued to swell.

"Who do you belong you?" He growled into Hannibal's ear, smirking when he saw that Hannibal was barely able to hold himself up.

"Y-You!" Hannibal cried out, coming just as Will shoved his knot inside, muffling that final cry into his pillow. Wearily, both men collapsed on their sides, still tied together, heavily panting.

"God…" Will panted, licking the drying blood off his omega's shoulder, "… You're so beautiful."

Hannibal couldn't stop the rumbling purr, feeling Will snuggle up a little closer.

He still had some time before Mischa had to go to bed.

Allowing his eyes to slip closed, he drifted off into sleep.

Chapter 28

Will woke up with a toddler on his chest and a teenager shaking him.

It was six in the morning.

“Papa! Come on!” Mikel squealed, patting at Will’s cheeks.

“Sweetie…” Will mumbled, one arm reached out to grab Hannibal. They were both up late making sure that the presents were wrapped and that the food prep for the party later on in the evening was sorted. He was tired. “Sweetie, it’s too early!”

“It’s Christmas though!”

“I know, I know.” Hearing Hannibal chuckling, Will looked up and shot his omega a quick glare, “I’m not getting out of this, am I?”

“Nope!” Mischa beamed, climbing onto the bed herself, “Come on, time to get up!”

There was no way he was getting out of this.

“Fine, fine, fine.” Will sighed, “Let me get dressed, and then we can head downstairs.”

……

Under the tree, they all sipped at hot chocolate, eating pain au chocolat, happily watching as the children opened their presents.

For Mischa, it was Slytherin merchandise, including some Slytherin Doc Martins that Will was especially proud of managing to get, a bean bag for her room, a rather expensive digital camera, a make-your-own wall collage kit, a galaxy night-lamp that she could change the colours of and speakers for her room.

“I don’t suppose it’ll be classical music we’ll be hearing?” Hannibal teased lightly, as Mischa smirked at him.

For Mikel, it was more fantasy items than Hannibal would have liked, including the dragon moneybox, along with some Slytherin items of his own (because of course, what house his older sister was in, he was in as well). He also received a mini vet kit that came with a small, stuffed dog (Cerberus looked a little jealous at this competition), a toy microscope, a smart satchel for his books and a build-your –own straws kit (Hannibal figured the straw letter pieces would help with Mikel’s spelling).

“Thank you!”

“You are both very welcome.” Will chuckled, “Apparently, Santa thought you both deserved something nice.”

Mischa rolled her eyes but didn’t say anything as Mikel nodded seriously.

“I will write him a thank you letter.” The four-year-old stated, as Hannibal nodded his approval.

“I’m sure he would appreciate that.”

……..

Hannibal bustled around the kitchen directing Will to various jobs as the children entertained themselves with their new presents. Mischa’s songs could only vaguely be heard from her room, which Hannibal was thankful for, as Mikel played vet with the very patient dogs.

“Everything will be perfect.” Will sighed, watching Hannibal rush around the kitchen, “It always is, remember?”

“Yes, except for the fact that my nicest tablecloth has a chocolate milk stain on it, which means that I’m going to have to get the second best out of the airing cupboard and hope that that one is of a suitable condition.”

“Which it will be, because I don’t think it’s ever seen the light of day since you brought it home.”

“Moths may have- “

“- Moths wouldn’t dare enter this house.” Will moved closer, pressing little kisses to Hannibal’s pulse point and down his neck, “This party, is going to be one of the best you’ve ever thrown, you’ll charm all those rich people and make them jealous that you’re a taken omega, and then… when they’re gone and the children are in bed, you and I will- “

“- Didn’t you like the gift that I gave you already?”

“I think I’ve been a really good boy this year though?” Will mock-pouted, “I had to put up with Jack after all.”

Pushing his husband’s face away, Hannibal rolled his eyes. “If you’re well-behaved at this party… I’ll think about it.” He chuckled when Will pinned him against the counter, pressing his lips together as Will pressed little kisses to his mating mark. “Go on, behave yourself.” He pushed Will away, “Try and get the children into their outfits. They’re laid out on the bed.”

“I assume my suit is already picked out?”

“The one suit that you own? Yes… I did pick out a tie that matches with my suit though.”

“Love you.”

“Hm, I love you too.”

……..

With him and Mikel wearing almost identical suits, they waited patiently in the foyer, as Hannibal helped Mischa get ready.

“Why is she taking so long?” Mikel whined, looking over at the kitchen, “The food smells so good!”

“First bit of advice to you.” Will chuckled, “Never ask a girl… or an omega to hurry up when it comes to getting ready.”

“… If I’m an omega, I won’t spend hours getting ready.”

“Of course not.”

Keeping his ear open for the doorbell, Will made sure that the dogs were all in the back room, with plenty of food that would keep them occupied for the evening… with the exception of Cerberus, who dodged all attempts to grab him, determined to stick with Mikel through thick and thin.

Eventually, not long before the first guest was due to arrive, footsteps made their way down the stairs.

“Wow.” Will smiled softly, “You look… amazing darling.”

Mischa beamed, twirling around a little to show it off. She wasn’t usually one for wearing dresses, but she wore them well, that was for certain. It was a stunning dark red dress, the shade matching the accents of the suits that the other three were wearing. The front of the dress hung around her knees, whilst the back of it was a little longer, brushing against the back of her calves. The bottom of the dress was decorated with black lace. The top of the dress was armless, dipping down a little daringly, but not overly so (she was only thirteen after all). On the top half of the dress, black, sown-in jewels glittered in the light, the pattern looking a little like antlers or vines.

“You are going to be such a heart-breaker when you grow up.” Will whispered, feeling like something was caught in the back of his throat.

When did his little girl grow up?

“Stunning, isn’t she?” Hannibal took over, clearly seeing that Will was unable to say anything more, “Now, let’s make some last-minute adjustments before the guests arrive.” He glanced down at Cerberus, who was panting up at him, “I hope you will be well-behaved?”

Cerberus barked, as Hannibal nodded seriously.

“Good.”

…….

“Such a lovely family!” Mrs Komeda praised, not for the first time that evening, “Hannibal, you’ll have those nice omegas, betas and probably a few Alphas knocking on your door when young Mischa comes of age.”

“We were at a dance before her school broke up for the holidays.” Hannibal chuckled, “There is quite a bit of interest already.”

“Motina!” Mischa rolled her eyes, sipping at her juice

“I cannot lie to Mrs Komeda.”

“And nor should you!” The beta woman beamed, “And little Mikel, I swear, he gets cuter and cuter every time I see him!”

“It’s the hair. Will’s untameable mop of brown curls on a face that sweet is enough to melt butter.” Hannibal explained teasingly, winking as the child in question came rushing past, slowing down when Hannibal cleared his throat warningly.

“I bet you find it hard to be too angry at him.”

“It’s a struggle.” Hannibal accepted, before clapping his hands together, “To wind down the evening, why don’t we have a small carol session.”

“With you on the piano?”

“Of course.” He, Will, Mischa and Mikel headed over to the piano in the corner, Hannibal sitting on the stool, Will and Mischa on either side and Mikel on his Motina’s lap, “Why don’t we start out… with God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen?”

Chapter 29

It was the new year when Hannibal first realised that there was something wrong with his husband. It was about five in the morning when he rolled over, intending to snuggle into his Alpha's side, only to find nothing but a cold side of the bed. Sleepily, he pushed himself up, looking around the room a little blearily.

The master bathroom light was off, so he probably wasn't in there.

"William?" He murmured, getting out of bed, grabbing his dressing gown and slippers, heading out of the room.

Both children were fast asleep.

Downstairs, he quickly spotted that Winston was missing and that the back door was open. Quickly, he rushed over, seeing nothing but darkness out there, shivering in the cold.

It was unlikely that Will would have just taken Winston out. If one dog needed to go, then they all went.

Something was wrong.

Rushing up to the bedroom, he grabbed something warm to get changed into, debating waking the children up, before deciding that he would lock the door behind him. He was just about to step out of the front door, when the police car pulled up outside the home.

For a moment, he assumed the worst, that Will was dead.

And then he imagined the second worst option, that they'd been caught.

When Will emerged from the back seat, Winston trailing on behind him, Hannibal couldn't contain the sigh of relief that escaped him, leaning against the doorframe.

"Are you Mister Lecter-Graham?" The officer couldn't quite contain his sneer at the idea that an Omega's last name was first… or that an Alpha had even partially taken their omega's last name.

"I am."

The man gestured to Will, who was looking more than a little confused. "We found him wandering down the main road…" He watched as Hannibal led Will inside, darting to the airing cupboard to grab a blanket, before helping Will to the sofa, turning up the heat a little.

"… Is he on any drugs? Medication?"

Hannibal turned to see that the officer had just followed them inside… a little rudely, but he was willing to let this one pass. "No." He answered.

"Not even any prescription ones?"

"No."

"Drink?"

Hannibal thought back to the previous evening, "I… he had two fingers of whiskey before we went to bed."

"Does he have a history of sleepwalking?"

“Stop speaking about me like I’m not here.” Will grumbled, finally having warmed up a little, “I’ll be fine.”

“Sir, you- “

“- My husband is a doctor.” Will snapped, “I will be fine.”

With no evidence that anything strange or criminal was going on, the officers begrudgingly left. As the door shut behind them, Hannibal turned to Will, sighing wearily at the look on his husband’s face.

“I’ll get breakfast started.”

“I’m sorry.” Will whispered, “I-I don’t know what’s wrong with me.”

He had never heard his husband sound so scared before. It unnerved Hannibal, as he got the coffee started. “You never need to apologise to me.” He whispered, “But… we may need to think about running some tests.”

Will looked exhausted at the mere thought, prompting Hannibal to explain a little further.

“Onset of sleepwalking in adulthood is less common than in children. It could be a seizure, or it could just be good, old-fashioned post-traumatic stress thanks to Jack.” Hannibal shook his head, “I am not taking the risk that it’s anything worse though.

“That… and the idea of it being PTSD is a little unlikely.” Will raised an eyebrow, “I have seen and done much worse after all.”

“Which is why I want to run some tests.” Hannibal leant over, pressing a kiss to Will’s lips, “This would be a good way to get Jack off our backs, especially if it does link back to him. Out lawyers will have a field day with that.”

Will did enjoy watching their lawyers in action, despite not having much of a need for them.

They were law-abiding citizens after all.

“You know…” Hannibal smirked, “… sleepwalkers demonstrate a difficulty handling aggression. Are you experiencing difficulty with aggressive feelings?”

Will chuckled, leaning over and pressing a kiss to Hannibal’s cheek, before whispering in his ear, “Don’t tempt me, I would bend you over this counter if there wasn’t a risk that the children would interrupt us.” He pressed another kiss to Hannibal’s lips before sitting back down, staring down into his mug of coffee.

“Sometimes…” He murmured, “… I feel like the fine china that Jack brings out for special guests. Other times, I feel like an old mug.”

“You entered into a devil’s bargain with Jack Crawford, this takes a toll.”

“You consider Jack to be the devil?”

“When it comes to how far he’s willing to push you to get what he wants, he’s certainly no saint.” Hannibal pressed a kiss to Will’s cheek, “Drink your coffee, before the children wake up.”

…….

“Not too much butter sweetie.”

Mikel quickly adjusted the amount on the blunt spreading knife, humming as he buttered his toast, legs swinging back and forth.

"We have to get some more school supplies before it starts up again next week." Hannibal then remarked, "That bag is looking a little worse for wear now."

Mischa frowned, "It's only got one little tear."

"Little tears lead to rips, which leads to books falling into dirty puddles." Hannibal sighed, "I am happy to let you pick one out, if that will make you feel a little better."

"Much, thank you."

Hannibal couldn't help but feel like he'd been pushed into that decision and was proud of that knowledge.

Vaguely, he heard Will's phone ringing, keeping one ear out on the conversation as Will went to answer it. Moments later, he returned, looking more than a little weary.

"Jack." He muttered, "Another case."

"William, maybe you should- "

"- I know." Will sighed, "I promise I'll be back soon… he thinks this one might be the Chesapeake Ripper though."

"… It's not."

“You know that, and I know that.” Will winked, with even that action looking a little tired, “But he doesn’t.”

…….

“Where’s your head?”

“On my pillow.” Will grunted, already fed up with Jack, “I didn’t sleep.”

“Ah, fun night then?”

Will stopped, forcing Jack to stop as well and turn back to him.

“I didn’t sleep… because I was having nightmares about all the crap you put me through.” Will snapped, “And don’t you dare imply anything like that again.”

“So we’re feeling a bit touchy today, got it” Jack waved it off, which only made Will’s anger grow, “You save lives by doing this remember?” He then paused, “I-I heard that you and Hannibal had a Christmas party.”

“Hmm.”

Shit.

They didn’t even think about inviting Jack or Alana… why would they?

“Mmm.” He tried to keep his voice nonchalant, “It was more like a gathering of Hannibal’s psychiatrist friends. All the upper class toffs.” He shrugged, “Nothing major.”

“Oh.” Jack still didn’t seem happy though.

Mentally apologising to Hannibal, Will sucked up his pride, “Hannibal keeps mentioning that we should invite you and your wife around for a meal sometime. If she’s available tonight, or- “

“- I’ll phone her.” Jack seemed a little less frosty now, “First, we’ve got a case on our hands.”

Rolling his eyes, Will entered the motel room, only to freeze in the doorway.

“Okay… I’m awake.”

Chapter 30

“I do wish you’d given me a little more warning.” Hannibal sighed over the phone, “I’m not sure I have anything suitable to serve.”

//Lies \\ Will chuckled, still sounding tired, //You’re already thinking up recipes now. \\

“Perhaps…. Well, I’m sure I can whip up something for tonight.”

//Sorry. What are the children up to? \\

“Mischa has decided to read Mikel The Hobbit.”

//She’s such a good girl. \\

“She’s a traitor.”

Will chuckled down the phone, //I’ll let you know if anything changes with Jack. This crime scene is… stunning. \\

“Oh?”

//The killer… made them into angels\\

Oh… now that was interesting.

……

“A masterpiece foie gras au torchon, with a late harvest of Vidal sauce...” Hannibal placed the plates on the table, “...with dried and fresh figs.”

Jack, clearly mollified from not being invited to the Christmas party, beamed at Hannibal, “Wonderful!”

As Hannibal took a seat, he turned to Jack’s wife, “Mrs Crawford, your husband introduced you as Bella. Are you an Isabelle, or an Annabelle?”

She chuckled, fondly, “I’m a Phyllis. Jack only calls me Phyllis when we disagree.”

“Ah.” Hannibal smiled softly, “You were named Bella for your beauty.”

“Way to show me up a little Jack.” Will muttered, as Mischa giggled in her own seat.

Jack smiled softly at his wife, not hearing Will’s little mutter, “We were both stationed in Italy. I was Army, she was NATO staff. All of the Italian men kept calling her, "Bella, Bella, Bella."” He shrugged, “Well, I wanted her to be my Bella.” He took his first bite of the meal and hummed in delight, “Cold foie gras with warm figs.”

Hannibal nodded.

“Very nice!”

Bella, however, didn’t look as sure, eying the children who were tucking into their own meal, before turning to Hannibal, “Would I be a horrible guest if I skipped this course?”

“Too rich?”

“Too cruel.”

“Phyllis.” Jack hissed, looking mortified.

“Jack.”

Hannibal wasn’t offended though, despite the bluntness of her tone, “First and worst sign of sociopathic behaviour: cruelty to animals.”

“Oh, that doesn't apply in the kitchen.” Jack stated, which was completely missing the point.

“I have no taste for animal cruelty…” Hannibal reassured Bella, “… It would set a bad precedent for the children otherwise, which is why I employ an ethical butcher.”

“An ethical butcher? Be kind to animals and then eat them?”

Hannibal looked her in the eyes, “I'm afraid I insist on it. No need for unnecessary suffering.” He turned his attention back to his food, sipping at his wine, “Human emotions are a gift from our animal ancestors. Cruelty is a gift humanity has given itself.”

“The gift that keeps on giving.” Jack sighed, as Will carefully cleared his throat.

“Children.” He murmured warningly, looking over at Mischa who rolled her eyes and turned her attention back to the food. Ducking in head in playful apology, Hannibal got up to refill everyone’s glasses, pausing when he leant over Bella.

Well… that was interesting.

And horrifying at the same time.

“Your perfume is exquisite.” He began, “Similar to the aroma on the air just after lightning strikes. Is it Dior?”

“… That is some nose you have there, Doctor.”

“He’s very charming isn’t he?” Will chuckled, “You should have seen him when he was working as a surgeon. One sniff and he seemed to know exactly what the problem was.”

Did Will notice how Hannibal’s hands tightened around his utensils?

“I first noticed my keen sense of smell when I was a young man.” Hannibal looked over at Bella, “I was aware one of my teachers had stomach cancer even before he was.”

Bella’s face fell, just a little, which Jack was oblivious to, praising Hannibal for his parlour trick.

“Indeed.” Hannibal collected the plates, “Now, for our next course, roasted pork shank…. And I assure you Bella, it was an especially supercilious pig.”

He couldn’t even bring himself to smile at his own cannibal joke.

……

//I don’t suppose you know where my cologne is. \\

“Which one?” Hannibal mused, watching as Mikel blew at the dandelion weeds that had yet again, managed to invade his pristine garden, sending the white seeds everywhere, “The nice

one that I bought you, or the one with a ship on the bottle."

//Hannibal- \\

"- How is the case going?"

//The woman was alive when she was skinned, they both were, but he used a paralytic… I think he turned them into angels to pray for him.\\

"He's afraid of something?"

//The Science trio ran some tests…. Apparently he has a brain tumour, most likely. He's afraid of dying in his sleep, so he's making angels to watch over him. \\

Hannibal fought not to react to the words, hoping, pleading with any deity that would listen, that his suspicions were wrong.

//Hannibal?\\

"Apologies." He chuckled, "I was merely thinking."

//A dangerous past time.\\ Will teased, //Fleming is here by the way. He's very eager to see Mikel again.\\

"Of course he is, Mikel is very charming." Glancing out of the window, Hannibal winced as more seeds were sent flying around the garden, eager dogs trying to eat them, "Perhaps we should arrange another playdate for them."

//I think that sounds like a perfect idea… I'll be back a little late tonight. If I don't wake up in time tomorrow, please tell Mischa I hope she has a nice first day back at school.\\

"I will." Hannibal took a deep breath, "I have an early morning appointment, tomorrow, So I will most likely be asleep before you return."

//I'll be as quiet as I can, I promise… I love you.\\

"And I love you too."

……

Making sure that Mikel was in the other room, working on some piano scales, Hannibal opened the door for his first patient of the day.

"Mrs Crawford… please come in."

……..

"How often do you see him?"

"Twice a week at first. Now usually just once."

"You're satisfied then?"

"Enough to keep seeing him."

"… Your intention is not to tell Jack."

She sighed, "I don't see what good it would do. Jack sees the world at its worst, I don't need him seeing me at mine…he already has too much to worry about."

Hannibal felt his heart clench in his chest at the soft words. Would Will have the same mind-set…was Will already aware that he was unwell. "He has room for one more worry… surely?" He whispered, "I feel like you're protecting him."

"I am." She straightened up a little, "I've had dinner at your home. You have a professional relationship with my husband…. there's no conflict of interest me being here?"

"It's unorthodox, but not unheard of. Given the nature of your problem, seeing someone who knows Jack removes some of the guesswork."

She sighed wearily, relaxing a little into the chair, "This all started as some misguided stab at maintaining my dignity."

"Nothing undignified about this."

"Not yet. But I have indignity to look forward to, don't I?"

Hannibal really didn't want to go into that...not until he had some definite answers about his own situation.

"The only indignity I see is resentment. Why do you resent your husband?"

"I resent that Jack... has too much to worry about to worry about me."

“But that’s your choice, not his.”

She smirked, “Then maybe you should see us both for couples’ counselling. You and Will seem to have the perfect relationship after all.”

“It took us some time to get there.” It hadn’t really, but that wouldn’t make her feel better, “I would recommend another psychiatrist for couples. I wouldn’t want you to have the home-couch advantage.”

She sighed, “It's hard enough dealing with how I feel about all of this. I don't need to deal with how Jack feels about it.”

The sinking feeling in Hannibal’s chest never eased.

Chapter 31

“There is no one and only spiritual centre of the brain.” Hannibal mused as he plucked a few books from the shelves, glancing over the banister to see Mischa and Will twirling around the room in time with the waltz he had playing in the background, Mikel clinging onto Will’s back and giggling madly, “Any idea of God comes from many different areas of the mind working together in unison.”

Pausing in his dancing to catch one of the books, Will shrugged, “Maybe I was wrong.” He sighed flicking through the pages, “How do you profile someone who had an anomaly in their head, changing the way they think?”

Hannibal pushed that feeling of dread to the back of his mind, clearing his throat, “A tumour can definitely affect brain function, even cause vivid hallucinations. However, what appears to be driving your angel maker to create heaven on earth is a simple issue of mortality.”

“Can't beat God, become him?”

“That’s blas-phe-my!” Mikel piped up, as Will beamed at him over his shoulder.

“Have we been learning new words today?”

“Actually, we’ve been working on piano scales.” Hannibal chuckled, “I won’t begrudge a little self-study though.”

“I think half of the people in my school would struggle to identify blasphemy.” Mischa stated, “Overachiever.”

“You were just the same at his age.” Hannibal chuckled, before clearing his throat, “You said your angel maker was afraid?”

“He feels abandoned.” Will sighed, “A feeling I sometimes identify with.”

“…You feel abandoned.”

Will glanced at Mischa, who took the hint, taking her brother off of Will’s back and heading to the other side of the office. “I do feel like Jack abandons me as soon as he get what he wants… in the way that Gods abandon their creations maybe.” He looked up at Hannibal, giving him a slightly shaky smile, “Why else would I be wandering around Wolf Trap in the middle of the night?”

“Hmmm… do you want my view?”

“Always.”

“Jack gave you his word he would protect your headspace, yet he leaves you to your mental devices.”

Will hummed in agreement, before changing the subject, “How do I catch this… angel maker?”

“If he were a classic, paranoid schizophrenic, you might be able to influence him to become visible.”

“What, scare him out into the daylight?”

“Might even get him to hurt himself, if he hasn't already?”

Will shook his head, “If he were self-destructive, he wouldn't be so careful.”

“Unless he's careful about being self-destructive…making angels to pray over him when he sleeps.” Hannibal glanced over at the children, smirking when he saw that Mischa was carefully listening in on the conversation, “Who prays over us when we sleep?”

……

Jack’s call came just as Will finished the second chapter of Peter Pan, making him groan, before he reached over to press a quick kiss to Mikel’s dark curls.

“Time to sleep now.”

“I can’t have one more chapter?”

Will eyed him for a moment, before deciding that Jack could wait.

At least for one more chapter.

……..

“When I call, I expect you to pick up!” Jack snapped at Will, for at least the fifth time since he’d arrived at the newest scene.

Will turned his attention away from the castrated genitals, looking over at Jack. “I was reading my kid a bedtime story.” He sighed, “I assumed you had it handled.”

He stormed past Jack, only just resisting the urge to shoulder him out of the way, looking up at the newest figure that was strung up above the alley.

“Is he done making angels, or is he just getting started?”

“I don’t know Jack.”

“He’s not just killing them when he’s sleepy. How’s he choosing them?”

“I don’t know Jack, ask him.”

“I’m asking you!”

Will snapped, “You’re the head of the behavioural science unit Jack, why don’t you come up with your own answers if you don’t like mine!”

Jack froze, as Will turned on his heel and turned away from him, moving to storm out of the alleyway.

“WILL! WILL!”

Will ignored him.

He was done with Jack’s attitude.

Hearing footsteps, that were clearly not Jack’s, Will slowed down a little bit, turning to see Bev running to catch up with him.

“I’ve never heard anybody talk to Jack, the way you talked to him.” She smirked, “I think my ears are still ringing, you’re a little bit mad, you know?”

Will stayed quiet, not trusting himself to speak just yet.

“Will… are you okay?” Bev winced, “I know it’s a stupid question, considering that none of us could possibly be okay doing what we do, but are you okay?”

“… Do I seem different?”

Bev tilted her head to one side, “You’re a little different, but you’ve always been a little different.” She smirked at him, “Brilliant strategy. That way, no one ever knows if something’s up with you.... will almost no one.”

“Hm.” Will shrugged with a small smile, knowing that she was right about Hannibal.

Hannibal always knew when there was something wrong with him. He cleared his throat, “How… how would I know if something was up with you?” He asked, finding that he actually a little fond of Bev.

To be fair, he liked all members of the little science group, but Bev was a favourite.

“You wouldn’t, but I would tell you if you asked me.” She tilted her head to one side, “Return the favour?”

……..

So, the angel maker had killed a rapist and murderer, and the woman who liked to watch.

Somehow, he’d known that.

He knew that the murdered security guard wasn’t actually a security guard, but a convicted felon.

How did he know?

“I’ll look into it.” Will sighed over the phone, “He might class as a vigilante, but in his mind, he’s doing God’s work. And playing at God has certain advantages.

//Such as? \\

“Always being alone.”

//He makes angels out of demons. How does he know they’re demons? \\

“He doesn’t have to know; all he has to do is believe.”

With a weary sigh, Bev thanked him before hanging up, leaving Will to feel a little guilty. He just knew that she was probably getting an earful from Jack, but honestly, if he saw that man, he might not be able to hold himself back.

……

It was a relief to come home, catching little Mikel in his arms as the toddler babbled eagerly in his ear. Everything interested his son, and he always saw the light in situations.

It was admirable, but they were a family of killers.

Would such a positive outlook thrive in this family.

He shook his head, not letting those thoughts over-come him.

Mikel was fine.

Mischa was fine…mostly.

He and Hannibal were more than fine.

They were all fine.

“Can we dance again?” Mikel asked, once he was done talking about his day, “Please?”

It seemed like just yesterday his son was toddling on behind him, tugging on Will’s pants legs when he felt like his Papa was walking too fast.

“Of course we can.” Will chuckled, smelling the food cooking in the kitchen and making his way in that direction, twirling as he went, making Mikel giggle.

“Again! Again!”

They entered the kitchen, as Hanibal turned to them, chuckling when he saw them. “Dinner will be ready soon, why don’t you get washed up Mikel?”

“Yes Motina!”

Wil lowered him to the ground, watching as he raced off, Cerberus racing after him.

“I sense...” Hannibal began, heading over to the alcohol cabinet, “... that our honey-roasted duck won’t be enough to ease those stress lines.” He pulled out Will’s favourite whiskey,

“Jack?”

“Jack.”

Chapter 32

After a night of reading yet even more of Lord of the Rings, Hannibal was more than ready to go to work, hoping that having Mikel focused on watching the Prince of Egypt for his religious studies class, would help shift his focus just a little bit.

Once they finished the books, it was only a matter of time before the child wanted to watch the films.

“Jack spent almost an hour ranting about your husband last night.” Bella began apologetically, although not without a soft smirk on her face, “You must tell me what it is about your family that… gets up riled up so.”

“I think it’s our…unwillingness to listen to every word that comes out of his mouth.” He cleared his throat, knowing that that sentence was just a little bit unprofessional, “Has Jack began to suspect about our meetings or your diagnosis? He’s a behavioural specialist, he must know you’re keeping something from him?”

“Oh, he knows.” Bella chuckled, “He asked me if I was having an affair by reassuring me that he didn’t have to ask.”

“I doubt he believes you’re unfaithful.”

She raised an eyebrow, “And why do you doubt that?”

“It’s clear you love your husband.”

“Women who love their husbands still finds reasons to cheat on them”.

“Not you.” Hannibal shifted back a little on his chair, “Still, you seem more betrayed by Jack than by your own body.”

“I don’t feel betrayed by Jack. And there’s no point in being mad at cancer for being cancer.”

“Sure, there is.” Hannibal was mad at whatever was affecting his husband after all.

“Cancer isn’t cruel.” Bella shrugged, “Tiny cell wanders off from my liver, gets lost, finds its way into my lung, where its just trying to do its job and… grow a liver.”

“What it grows and where it’s growing it will likely kill you.”

“Not likely… it will kill me. And no amount of blueberries or antioxidants can change that now.”

“… But you hold Jack accountable for his inability to cure cancer.” He frowned at the look on her face, “Should I have said his inability to save you? Would that be more accurate?”

“I am slowly shrinking.” Her voice was tight, “While this tiny thing grows larger every day… And yet I feel fine.”

“You will feel fine. Up until the precise moment you don't.”

“It's a... really very dull story, though, isn't it? The ending is always the same, and that same is that it ends.”

Hannibal fought to keep himself from thinking of Will, “So, you withdraw from your relationship with your husband, the man who strolled along the quays of Livorno, Italy, and called you Bella.”

She seemed to understand where he was coming from there, merely nodding in understanding at him.

They spent the rest of the session in silence.

…….

"...and then Moses yelled at the Pha-roh, telling him to let his people go, and his brother looked really said about it and- "

Will glanced over at Hannibal, who was sipping at his tea. "Religious studies?"

"Hmmm."

"And you let him watch a film about it?"

"It is a critically acclaimed film, with members of all religions agreeing that it is possibly the most accurate re-telling of the story of the Hebrew's flight from Egypt."

"Ah." Will glanced back over at Mikel, who was on the plagues now, Mischa listening to him indulgently. He then rubbed at his eyes, yawning as Hannibal eyed him in concern.

"You were tossing and turning a lot last night." He softly pointed out, "Something past eleven, something past two, past five- "

"- It's just this case." Will sighed, "I'm sure I'll be fine tonight."

…….

He was not fine.

“Motina! Motina!” Mikel climbed onto the bed, the clock showing that it was barely past six in the morning, “Papa’s on the roof!”

“Hmm?”

It was then that Hannibal registered the dogs all barking and causing a ruckus. Grabbing Mikel, he rushed to where the noise was coming from.

Mischa’s room.

“I don’t know what happened!” Mischa cried out, the dogs all clambering around her, “He-he just wandered into my room and-and- “ She gestured at the wide open windows.

Hannibal placed his son on the bed, rushing over and peering out of the window, seeing his husband just standing there, looking vacantly out onto the background.

“William!”

Will jerked, muscles tensing as he looked around, before turning back to them, a slightly panicked look on his face. Slowly, he moved back inside, taking a hold of Hannibal’s hand to steady himself, one hand pressed against his head as he tried to clear his thoughts.

Not easy to do when dogs and children were crowding around in concern.

“Downstairs!” Hannibal ordered the dogs sharply, all of them reluctantly heading in that direction, with the exception of Winston (who was loyal to a fault) and Cerberus (who was loyal to Mikel). “Mischa, Mikel, go and get changed please.”

“You’re in my room Motina!”

“Then get changed in the bathroom.”

She huffed, but went to do just that, as Mikel and Cerberus left the room as well.

“What’s wrong with me?” Will whispered.

Hannibal didn’t know the answer.

“I don’t have any appointments today.” He sighed, “Let’s… just spend the day here.”

……

Will had a quick shower, doing the bare minimum to clean himself before heading down to the living room, sitting on the sofa as Hannibal went to take Mischa to school.

Playing on the floor in front of him, Mikel eyed his Papa curiously.

“Are you okay?” The four-year-old asked softly.

“Just tired baby, okay?”

Mikel didn’t look convinced, playing with his toys for a little longer, before turning back to look at Will. “Are you having bad dreams?”

“No baby.”

“Because I don’t like sleeping if I have bad dreams.” Mikel continued, “I sit by the window until I feel sleepy again.”

Will frowned, “Have you… have you had to do that recently?”

“No, because Mischa got better.”

“Of course.”

Half an hour passed before Hannibal returned, giving the pair of them a soft smile, ”Mikel…” He began, “…can you go and play in your room for a bit please?”

Mikel looked like he was going to pout for a moment, before sighing and nodding, collecting up some of the toys and rushing up the stairs, Cerberus following on behind.

The other dogs were still all gathered around Will, not leaving his side.

There was an awkward silence, before Hannibal cleared his throat, “You’ve been restless at night.” He whispered, “It’s… difficult to lie still and fear going to sleep when it's there to think about. You listen to your breathing in the dark and the tiny clicks of your blinking eyes.”

Will sighed, “I-I dream more now than I used to.”

“Your dreams were the one place you could be physically safe, relinquishing control… but not anymore.”

“…I thought about zipping myself up into a sleeping bag before I go to sleep but...” Will trailed off with a nervous chuckle, “… It sounds like a poor man's straitjacket, and I didn’t think that you’d be impressed with me bringing a sleeping bag to our bed.”

“I would not.” Hannibal acquiesced, reaching and taking Will’s hand into his own.

“… I was thinking about the Angel Maker and how he chooses his victims.” Will changed the subject swiftly, “He doesn't see people how everyone else sees them. He can tell if you're naughty or nice, or he thinks he can.”

“So, God has given this person insight into the souls of men.”

Will rolled his eyes, “God didn't give him insight, God gave him a tumour.”

Hannibal watched as Will eyes focused on the statue of the black stag in the corner of the room, voice trailing off a little as he finished.

“He's just a man whose brain is playing tricks on him.”

For a moment, there was silence, until Hannibal cleared his throat, “I-I think that’s something you may have in common.”

“You think my brain is playing tricks on me?”

“William…you were standing on the roof just outside of our daughter’s room, without even responding to her or the dogs.” Hannibal desperately tried to get through to him, bringing Will’s hand up to his mouth and placing a gentle kiss on the knuckles.

That was when he smelt it.

The sickness.

“Hannibal?”

“We need to get to a hospital. Right now.”

Chapter 33

With Mikel safely watching the Lion King on his ipad and headphones, Hannibal and Will focused on the doctor who was seeing them.

“You mentioned headaches here.” She stated, “Have they been any worse lately? More frequent?”

“Yes, actually.” Will nodded, glancing over at Hannibal who looked so tense, that he might snap at any moment, “I think it’s just stress, but- “

“- It’s not.” Hannibal cut in, “I know it’s not.”

Will didn’t argue with him. He knew what his mate’s nose was like, and if he was saying that something was wrong, then something was deeply wrong.

“Please run some scans.” Hannibal asked, adding a little bit of omega persuasion into the request as the doctor looked like she was going to argue for a moment, before relenting.

“I’ll need to forward the request to neurology, but I will make it as urgent.”

“Thank you. I’ll be sure to call in a week if nothing happens.” The threat was obvious.

Will loved this man.

And then his phone started to ring.

…….

‘What kind of mother exposes her children to someone who’s losing their mind?’

The words ran around in Will’s mind.

He scared Mischa this morning… how long would it be until Hannibal decided that he didn’t want to expose their children to Will and whatever was going on with him?

How far would it go?

“-ill? Will?”

Startled out of his thoughts, he looked up at Bev, who was giving him a concerned look, “Sorry.” He whispered, “What were you saying?”

“I was talking about that near-death experience he had as a kid…when he nearly suffocated in the fire.” Her tone was thoughtful, “The wife said that it happened at the farm he grew up on. What if he went back there?”

Will paused, thinking for a moment, before nodding. “You’d better let Jack know. Tell him I’ll meet him there.”

“Got it.” She gave him a look of concern, “Are you sure you’ll be okay?”

“I’ll survive.”

……

“It’s Buddish.” Will stared up at the last victim of the Angel Maker, “He made himself into an angel. It wasn’t God, it wasn’t man… it was his choice to die.”

Jack frowned, “His choice?”

“As much as he can make it.” Will looked down at the ground for a moment, before turning to Jack, “I don’t know how much longer I can be useful to you, Jack. No, scrap that, how much I want to be useful for you. I want my peaceful life back Jack before you knocked on my door.”

“You’ve caught three dangerous killers Will!”

“You’re the arresting officer Jack.”

“You caught the last three that we’ve had!”

“Elliot Buddish…surrendered, and Abigail Hobbs is still out there somewhere. My daughter was nearly killed by this girl, my family was targeted, and she is still wandering about out there!”

There was a moment of silence, before Jack sighed wearily, “You know, I’m used to my wife not talking to me. I don’t have to get used to you not talking to me too.”

“It’s getting harder and harder to make myself look Jack.”

“Nobody’s asking you to look alone.”

“But I am looking alone!” Will snapped, “And you know what looking at this does!”

“I know what happens if you don’t look, and so do you!”

Will shook his head, “I can make myself look, but the thinking is shutting down.”

“…What is it about this one?”

“It isn’t this one, it’s all of them! It’s the next one, it’s the one that I know is coming after that!” Will took a deep breath, “I have to so this, this is all bad for me, and it’s bad for my family.”

There was a pause, before Jack sighed, “I’m not your father, Will. I’m not gonna tell you what you ought to do- “

“- But that’s exactly what you’re gonna do.”

“So, you’re just going to go back to that little shop and ignore all these killings that you could prevent? Go back to your picture-perfect family, with your rich omega to support you?”

“It’s the life that I was perfectly happy with until you dragged me here.”

“You wanna quit.” Jack scoffed, “Quit then!”

And then he was turning and storming away.

Will sighed wearily as he watched him leave, turning back to the figure strung up high, only to jump back when he saw the Angel Maker kneeling in front of him

“I see what you are.” Buddish whispered.

“…What do you see?”

“Inside… I can bring it out of you.”

“Not all the way out.”

“I can give you the majesty of your becoming!”

Will was silent as the man fell down on his face.

Dead.

Will sighed wearily, before turning away.

He needed to get home.

He needed to get back to Hannibal.

……

“Put your pinky finger there.” Mikel instructed him seriously, as they both sat at the piano, having been shooed into the other room when Hannibal’s patient arrived, “And that finger there.”

“And what chord is this?”

“B major.”

Will nodded proudly, “You’ll be doing this professionally soon. Are you going to play at our next gathering?”

“Mischa’s birthday?” Mikel shrugged, “I can learn Happy Birthday?”

“That sounds like a lovely idea.”

For a moment, they played the simple duet, Mikel’s fingers moving over the keys faster and faster the more times they went over it.

When the door to the office opened, to reveal Hannibal, Will straightened a little at the look on his omega’s face.

“Problem?”

“Jack has found out my therapy session with his wife.” Hannibal stated, “They’re talking in the main office right now.”

“.... This isn’t going to help with his view of us.”

“Or, maybe it will.” Hannibal shrugged, “I am bound by doctor-patient confidentiality after all, Jack isn’t special enough to warrant breaking that. He might need a shoulder to cry on.”

“... You can’t be serious?”

“Oh I am.” Hannibal pressed a kiss to his cheek, “Trust me… Having Jack see us as confidants, rather than opposition, may work in our favour.”

"…You're enjoying that you have something over him."

"Hmm, just a little." Hannibal then pressed a kiss to the top of Mikel's head, "One more time for me?"

"Yes Motina."

Will leant back, pressing the keys as he thought back to his beloved's words.

Could he be a confidant for Jack, without working for him?

He wasn't sure it was possible.

Chapter 34

“What was Hannibal’s colour scheme for this?”

Mischa hummed, examining the outfits along the rack as they wanted for the personal designer, “I think he said it all depended on what I picked. Apparently the whole theme revolves around it.”

Will chuckled, “Well, it is your birthday party.” His daughter only tended to wear dresses for formal occasions, and of course, with every new formal occasion, a new dress had to be bought.

They couldn’t have pre-worn outfits after all.

“What sort of thing are you looking for?” He tried to keep his attention off of a stag he saw wandering about outside.

There had been serious delays in getting him scheduled for his brain scans and Will knew that it was only a matter of time before Hannibal started calling in favours… and ruining careers.

On the plus side, Jack hadn’t contacted him in almost two months.

Mischa continued moving through the racks, expression unreadable as she ran her fingers over sleeves and skirts. “Something that makes me seem… Ultra-luminary.” She stated, “If Motina wants to invite those snooty girls from my class, I want to make sure they all see me.”

“You want to strike awe into their hearts.”

“And a little bit of fear.”

The pair smirked at each other, just as the designer rounded the corner and clapped their hands together. “Wonderful to see you both again!” They greeted, pressing a quick kiss to Mischa’s cheek, and nodding at Will, already used to their peculiarities, “No Hannibal today?”

“Not today.” Will chuckled, “He had a patient who insisted on seeing him.” He then gestured to the bundle curled up against his side, “Mikel has decided to join us instead.”

“Excellent.” The designer cooed a little over the four-year-old, before turning back to Mischa, “So, a birthday party… what were we thinking?”

“Something… daring.”

“Daring we can do.”

And so, it began.

Will watched dress after dress being tried out and paraded.

Dresses that had safety pins in them but cut way too low on her chest.

Long elegant black dresses with a slit up one side.

Black corset dresses that weren’t daring enough in her eyes.

“I do have something a little special.” The designer stated, “It is… bold though.”

Mischa visibly perked up and Will could hear his wallet screaming, even as he nodded. "Please…. I'm sure it will be amazing."

"Of course it will be with such a lovely model!"

They swanned off, as Mischa turned to Will with a shy little smile, "You really don't mind."

"Your Motina has never spared any expense for either of your birthdays, ever." Will gave her a smile back, "He's not about to start now."

"Here it is!" The tailor re-entered the room, "Come darling, this is the one, I can just feel it!"

Will hoped so. Mikel was fairly entertained by the little fashion show, but it wouldn't be long until the four-year-old grew too tired and started to fuss.

He'd already hated the fact that he'd had to leave Cerberus behind.

"Ta-da!"

Will turned his attention back to Mischa, sucking in a little breath when he saw what she was wearing.

It was a blood red dress, Mischa's favourite colour. It had a corseted bodice, which cinched Mischa in at her waist, giving her a little bit of a figure that the teenager didn't usually have. It had a glittering, jewel-encrusted bust which was a little low for Will's taste, with a figure-hugging, full-length skirt.

"Do you like it?" Mischa asked, already admiring herself in the mirror as the designer turned to Will and instantly spotted the look on the Alpha's face.

“Don’t worry, we will have it adjusted so that it is a little less… Hollywood and more birthday party.” They made a vague gesture to the chest area, which was really the only issue Will had with the dress.

“It’s perfect.” He whispered, before nodding his head sharply, “Mischa. Just say the word, and this is the one.”

“…Yes, this is the one.”

……..

Hannibal eyed the bag curiously when it was delivered after the adjustments were made, but didn’t push the matter, merely asking what colour it was for the colour scheme of the party.

“Blood red.” He mused, “I have the perfect menu.” He turned back to his kitchen, glancing back at Will, “Have you had a look at Tattle Crime recently?”

“No, the less I have to deal with Lounds the better.” Will frowned, “Why?”

“Apparently, there’s a story going around… that the Chesapeake Ripper is already in custody.” Hannibal gestured at the laptop on the coffee table, even as Will sat there in shock for a moment.

“Already… in custody?” There was a moment in silence, before he couldn’t contain the laughter any longer, laying back on the sofa and clutching at his stomach, unable to stop himself at the thought, “Who? How?”

“Abel Gideon… in the care of Doctor Frederick Chilton.”

The laughing only grew in intensity and volume, forcing Will to grab a cushion to try and muffle the sound, even as Hannibal chuckled along beside him.

“Ludicrous isn’t it.” Hannibal chuckled, “Usually I would say let them believe what they want to believe, but with the Chesapeake Ripper name on the line, I am not willing to let Chilton have this moment.”

“So?”

“So, we wait for Jack to give you a call.” Hannibal pressed their lips together in a brief, chaste kiss that Will wanted nothing more than to deepen, “And when he asks you to go and verify whether or not this Gideon is the Ripper… you prove him wrong.”

“Are you going to be going hunting this weekend?”

“Hmmm, let’s see how it goes.”

……..

They were watching Moana when they got the call, Will moving to take it outside as he listened to Jack asking him to come alone. There was no apology for the words spoken in the previous case, but there was an underlying tone of stress there, either from the Ripper already having been caught, or his wife’s condition.

// “I need you on this one Will.” \\ Jack sighed, // “Please.” \\

“You want me to fact-check Freddie Lounds.”

// “And prove her wrong… possibly.” \\

“You think he’s been locked up these past couple of years, and that’s why we haven’t had any confirmed Ripper killings?”

// “It’s a strong possibility.” \\

Will glanced over his shoulder at Hannibal, who was staring right at him, the omega giving him a small nod. That was all that was needed to be said.

“Fine.” Will sighed, “One last time Jack.”

// “I’ll pick you up. Wolf Trap right?” \\

“Actually, we’re still in Baltimore this weekend. Birthday preparations for Mischa.” Even as he said it, he wished he hadn’t, wincing as Jack made an interested little sound.

// “Ah, how old is she this time around? \\

“Fourteen.”

// “Lovely. I’ll be there in twenty minutes.” \\

Jack hung up as Will went back inside, taking his seat by Hannibal and pressing a kiss to the omega’s cheek, “Jack’s on his way… you were right.”

“Of course, I was.” Hannibal chuckled, “Tell me all about it when you get back?”

“Obviously.”

“And do tell me what you think of Chilton.”

“Ugh.”

……

“I always feel a little nervous going into these places.” Will stared up at the hospital, as they headed up the stone steps.

“Why’s that?”

“... I’m afraid they won’t let me back out.”

Jack chuckled, the noise sounding a little uncomfortable, “Don’t worry, I won’t leave you here. ‘m afraid what your omega would do if I did.”

Will bit back the comment about how he should be scared of Hannibal anyway, tensing up a little when they were led through the corridors, to an office where a smug beta sat.

He’d only really ever heard of Frederick Chilton in passing by Hannibal, who had attended numerous event that had the man in attendance and hated every moment of them because of this.

Smug.

Arrogant.

Desperately aiming high above his station.

Mischa had heard the description and called Chilton ‘thirsty’ for her Motina. Upon further investigation, Hannibal was disgusted, and Mischa was grounded for the evening for even

suggesting the possibility.

And… now all he could think of, were those words and the sly smirk on his daughters' face

Perfect.

Just what he needed.

Chapter 35

“Doctor Bloom has just called me about you Mister Graham… or is it Doctor Graham.” Chilton tilted his head to one side, “I can’t see Hannibal mating with just a Mister?”

“And yet he did.” Will hated it here already, “Technically, it’s Mister Lecter-Graham you know, but we can stick with Mister Graham… if it makes you feel better.”

He was not about to let this upstart beta speak to him like this.

An upstart beta who had designs on his husband.

“So not a Doctor?”

“Nope.” Will popped the P obnoxiously.

“And not FBI either.”

“Not in Jack’s wildest dreams.”

Jack looked a little put out by this.

“Ah… please gentlemen, take a seat.”

“Thank you.”

Once they were seated, Jack leant forwards a little in his seat, “Dr Chilton, we’re going to need to see the crime scene while it’s still relatively undisturbed.”

“I assure you, for something so disturbing, it is quite undisturbed.”

Will then spoke up, “Why was a nurse left alone with a prisoner in a high-security psychiatric hospital?”

“… For the two years since he was brought here, Gideon behaved perfectly and gave every appearance of cooperating with attempts at therapy. As dictated by our present administrator, security around him was slightly... Relaxed.” Chilton sighed, “I cannot help feeling responsible myself for what happened. He sat directly across from me…” He pointed at Will, who tried not to tense up, “… and I had no idea what he was hiding. And now one of our staff is dead.”

There was something so… false in the tone.

Something off-putting.

“I understand, doctor.” Jack didn’t seem to notice it, or if he did, he wasn’t letting it show, “Mr… Lector-Graham is going to need to see the crime scene with as much privacy as you can provide.”

“Oh yes.” Chilton shifted a little in his chair, eyes focused intently on Will, like a boy peering at an ant through a magnifying glass, “That thing that you do. You’re quite the topic of conversation in, uh, psychiatric circles. Hannibal always kept quiet during those conversations, and now I understand why.”

“Oh?” Silently, Will vowed to get Hannibal some flowers on the way home. His beloved was so loyal.

“A unique cocktail of personality disorders and neuroses that make you a highly skilled profiler, who chooses to run a repair shop instead…and Hannibal kept you all to himself.” Chilton smirked, “Anyone would think this was all part of a cunning plan of his.”

Maybe a set of new knives… to kill this idiot with.

“He’s not here to be analysed.” Jack was quick to defend him, which was either because he was impatient to get to the crime scene or because he wanted to stay on Will’s good side.

Not because he actually cared or anything.

“Perhaps he should be.” Chilton eyed Will thoughtfully, “Hannibal was being quite selfish keeping you hidden away. We are woefully short of material on your sort of… thing. Would you mind speaking to some of the staff?”

“Doctor- “

“- No, no, no. Not this trip.” Chilton smirked, “Maybe on a special visit. Maybe you could bring Hannibal with you, if he makes you feel safe?”

“… You think I’ll be offended at the…remark that I need my omega to protect me?” Will raised an eyebrow, “There’s a certain… thrill in having an omega being so protective over you, let me tell you that Doctor Chilton…especially as it’s something you’re unlikely to experience yourself.”

“I- “

“- The crime scene? Please.”

…….

Chilton was convinced that he had the Ripper in his clutches, taking care to point out the removal of organs and abdominal mutilations, looking over his shoulder at Will every so often, clearly dying to say something.

"Doctor Chilton consulted on the case when we failed to catch the Ripper after his last series of murders." Jack seemed to be enjoying rubbing the salt into Chilton's wounds, unwilling to believe that the killer he'd been chasing after for so long, had been in Chilton's hands this entire time.

Of course, he wasn't, but looking at that crime scene for the first time….well, Will was impressed.

"The reason you couldn't catch and failed to catch the Chesapeake Ripper Jack… was that I had him."

Will was going to enjoy proving this idiot wrong.

……..

"Motina?"

Looking up from his paperwork, Hannibal looked over at Mikel, who was carefully painting the dragon money box, paying very careful attention to the finer details… of bright purple.
"Hmm?"

"Do you remember that lady who came to the officer and saw the pretty pictures you drew?"

Miriam Lass.

Why was Mikel bringing this up right now?

“I do.” Hannibal carefully placed his pen on the desk, “I am surprised that you do though. You were very little.”

“It was scary…. Is that going to happen again?”

Hannibal couldn’t say no. There was every chance that someone may start fixated on their family, to the point where Hannibal would have to… take care of the situation.

“It might.” He didn’t like lying to his children, “But remember, that your Papa and I are always here to protect you.”

“Promise?”

“Promise.”

…….

“The volume of Abel Gideon's mail is becoming a nuisance.” Chilton smirked, “Sometimes I feel like his secretary rather than his keeper.”

“Any specific correspondences that stood out from the others?” Alana asked, having arrived just as Will was finishing the examination of the crime scene.

It was nothing like his beloved, and he found himself offended by this.

“Mostly researchers or PhD candidates requesting interviews…. A scattered dozen lonely hearts seeking his hand in marriage.”

“… He butchered his last wife and her family on Thanksgiving.”

“There's no accounting for taste... or intelligence.”

Turning his attention away from the window, Will decided that he wasn’t going to let this go on for any longer, “Murdering his wife was impulsive. The Chesapeake Ripper is methodical, meticulous… That's why he's so hard to catch.” It was hard to keep the pride out of his voice.

Well over two decades uncaught.

One of the most feared and prolific serial killers in the USA.

“Was so hard to catch.”

And of course, Chilton had to ruin his mood.

“Will you be conducting a joint interview?”

“Separate.” Alana answered, “Compare and contrast.”

Chilton smirked, “I know you're anxious to get on with it. You have talked to Gideon before, for some length of time.”

“Well, I saw him mainly in court. I wrote an article about him in the journal of criminal psychology.”

“He is very familiar with you… “ Chilton got to his feet, “… He has given you a lot of thought.”

“You had some sessions with him?” Will asked her, as she nodded at him.

“Yes, two, a couple years ago when he was first institutionalized.”

I've read your notes, of course. They were… more or less helpful as I conducted my own interviews with Dr. Gideon over the years.”

Alana’s smile got tight and very obviously forced, “Well, I'm glad I was helpful.”

Will couldn’t resist, “More or less.”

Alana gave him an amused look, even as Chilton looked less than impressed with the statement.

Will didn’t care.

He needed to have a little bit of fun if he had to participate to this trainwreck of an interview, without laughing.

Chapter 36

Hannibal felt a little cruel laughing at Will's enactment of the crime scene and then the interview, but honestly, what did Chilton expect if he was going to try and pass Gideon off as the Chesapeake Ripper?

And to repeat a performance?

Sloppy.

//It screams of coaching. \\ Will sighed, //Just how to prove it. \\

"I can certainly think of one way." Hannibal chuckled, looking over at the sleeping form of his son lying on the sofa, "Mischa has gone to see a film with some friends, are you okay to pick her up from the pictures whilst I go and stock up on our herbs and spices."

//Of course. It's good that she's making friends. \\

"I think she sees it as more of a minion's kind of situation, but yes, it's nice."

//I'm not even going to dignify that with an answer. \\ Will sighed, //I'll see you later mon cher. \\

"See you later."

Ending the call, hoping that Will's cajun accent slipping in meant they would be having fun tonight, Hannibal lifted Mikel up into one arm, feeling Mikel's tiny nose nuzzle into his neck for a moment, breathing in his scent before relaxing again as he grabbed their bags and coats with the other hand, opening the door, only to stop.

“Jack?”

“I’m sorry.” Jack moved to step into the office as Hannibal rolled his eyes, moving to place the bags and coats back on the chair, using both hands to hold his son as he waited for the Alpha to continue.

“Um... I was just...uh... “

“In the neighbourhood?”

An obvious lie, but Hannibal was willing to let that go.

“Yeah, something like that.

“.... How’s Mrs Crawford?”

Jack looked over at him, before sighing, “Yeah… that’s why I was in the neighbourhood. She’s fine.” He took a seat and shrugged, “Well, she tells me that she’s fine and she tells me when she’s not.”

“You expect me to tell you more?”

Jack tensed at the tone, “Look, Bella's at a NATO conference. I can't talk to her. She's working. I doubt I could talk to her if she was here!”

“About her condition?”

“Yes! About her cancer, about her dying.” Jack was frustrated, and that was showing in his voice, “She doesn't want to talk to me about it.”

Hannibal shook his head, “I am prohibited from talking about it… Doctor-Patient confidentiality.”

Jack looked ready to explode. “You must talk about it with Will!”

“I do not.” It was a bit of a lie, but Jack didn’t need to know that, “Will is not included in the therapy sessions, and therefore, he is not privy to the conversation either.”

“He’s your Alpha! He has to know everything, just as I have the right to know about how my wife is feeling!”

Hannibal’s fingernails dug into the palm of his hands, “You are stressed, so I will ignore that remark for the time being. As it stands though, Will has enough respect for me and my profession not to ask for any personal details. Our conversations are unrelated to our work, unless Will needs a sounding board for the cases you pull him into. We do have two children after all, they take up a lot of the conversation.”

“Well, can’t we just consider this a conversation?”

“No.”

“Well what would you class it as then?!”

The bellow made Mikel stir a little, a sleepy whimper breaking free as Hannibal tensed. “I consider this… to be desperate coping.”

“You don’t think I have a right to know what’s happening with my wife!”

“I am saying no such thing.” Hannibal kept his voice firm and low, not willing to be pulled into this argument, “You have every right to know what’s happening, but not from me.”

Jack threw his hands up into the air in exasperation, “Well, I’m not going to just-just stand outside my marriage and watch this happen! If that’s what she wants, too bad! She married the wrong guy for that!”

Here, Hannibal understood a little of what was happening.

After all, whatever was hurting Will was hurting him too… how would he feel if the tables were turned?

“I’ll offer one insight.” He sighed, “She doesn’t think she married the wrong guy.”

Jack seemed to deflate right in front of him, sitting heavily on the nearest chair and burying his face into his hands, “I-I can’t stop thinking about when my wife is going to die. I look at her side of the bed and I think, ‘is she gonna die there?’ I can't stop thinking about it, you understand? I can't stop!”

Mikel was definitely waking up now, as Hannibal sent a mental apology to Will for this entirely unexpected event.

“You’re dreading the loss of your wife.”

“Yes…And I'm thinking about other losses too.”

“What other losses are you dreading?” When Jack was silent, Hannibal shook his head, “Jack, you can't save her. She won't let you. The cancer won't let you… Who else couldn't you save?”

"… Her name was Miriam Lass."

It took every inch of Hannibal not to react to the name, hoping that Mikel was too far gone to hear them.

He wasn't sure if his son could control his expressions like he could.

"Tell me about her."

……

He was still a little frustrated at Jack by the time he made it home, but knowing that the man was still worrying and full of guilt and grief over the missing, presumed dead, Miriam Lass did help to take the sting away from it, just a little bit.

With Mikel curled up in his arms, Cerberus sleepily trotting on behind, Hannibal finally made it into the house, seeing Will rush into the living room, sighing in relief when he saw them.

"I was worried." He gently whispered, "What happened?"

"Jack decided that he wanted more information on what his wife is going through." Hannibal handed Mikel over, unable to stop himself from smiling at the automatic way that Mikel would curl into his Alpha parent, breathing in his scent before settling down again, "With absolutely no regard for doctor-patient confidentiality."

"I can predict how that went."

"I managed to change the subject." Hannibal smirked, "To Miriam Lass."

“…You are a genius.” Will leant over, pressing a gentle kiss to Hannibal’s cheek, “How is she by the way?”

“Well enough. I’m thinking about finally putting THAT plan into action soon.”

“Beat Jack whilst he’s at his lowest?”

“Exactly.” Hannibal looked around, “We have everything for the birthday tomorrow, don’t we?”

“We had everything last week.” Will chuckled, “All we need are the guests.”

“And the food…I assume Jack isn’t going to command your attentions tomorrow?”

“I’m meeting up with the forensic trio tomorrow.” Will stated, “But then I am entirely available for decorating.”

“…Why don’t you see if you can invite them.”

“We’re in the middle of an investigation darling.”

“…Perhaps just Fleming then, a friend for Mikel?”

“I’ll see what I can do.”

Chapter 37

Really, Hannibal should have expected this.

Heading up the stairs, ready to settle down for the night, he saw that Mischa's bedroom light was still on. Heading over there, he knocked on the door, hearing movement inside as he chuckled.

"Mischa? It is long past your bedtime you know?"

"… I know."

Hannibal cautiously pushed open the door, seeing the dress hanging up on the wardrobe door, still in it's bag to keep it from staining or wrinkling before the big day.

"You should be sleeping." He sighed, "It is a big day after all."

"I know, I just- I don't think I can sleep right now."

"Ah." Hannibal took a seat on the edge of the bed, "Too excited for tomorrow?"

"… I'm worried about this case that Papa's working on."

Hannibal remained silent, waiting for her to gather her thoughts and explain her thought process.

"Why can't we let this guy take the credit for being the Ripper? Then nobody will be looking at us!"

“I’m afraid it’s not that simple.” Hannibal sighed, “If we were going to let Gideon take the credit for being the Ripper, then the Ripper could never work again.”

“But… not all of your killings are turned into displays?”

“No, but some people need to be made an example of.”

Mischa still looked unsure.

“It’s also a matter of pride.” Hannibal continued, “Gideon murdered his family in an impulsive manner. He does not have the temperament to be the Ripper, nor does he have the true artistic talent. Anyone can replicate a crime scene.”

“As you’ve proven.”

“As I have proven.” Hannibal chuckled, “Gideon doesn’t deserve the title, and I refuse to let Chilton have the satisfaction of thinking that he’s caught me.”

“… So, this is petty pride?”

“I think it’s time for bed now.”

……

“There's no detectable consistency with The Ripper victims.” Katz sighed, “He doesn't Hunt exclusively within his own ethnic group. He's killed all creeds, colors, men and women.”

“She has the exact same wound pattern as the last-known victim of The Chesapeake Ripper, and I mean exact.”

“We never found a body for his last known victim.”

An awkward silence filled the room, as Will looked away from them.

Miriam Lass.

Jack’s greatest failure and one of the only reasons Will kept doing this.

Because seeing that broken look on Jack’s face would be worth it all.

“… Then the victim before that.”

Will cleared his throat, “I see The Ripper, but I don't... Feel The Ripper.” He gestured at the corpse, “This is plagiarism.”

“We never made the wound patterns for any of The Ripper's victims public.”

Fighting the urge to groan, Will shrugged, “Well, maybe he is The Ripper, I don't know…. But if he's a plagiarist, the real Chesapeake Ripper is gonna make sure everybody knows it”

He looked Jack right in the eyes, as the older Alpha sighed wearily.

With a wave of his hand, he dismissed them as he stormed out of the room. As he disappeared, Will sighed and turned to the others. “Poor timing, I know.” He sighed, “But Hannibal wanted to ask if Fleming would be allowed to come to Mischa’s birthday party, fo Mikel, you know?”

“It’s her birthday?!” Katz punched him lightly on the arm, “We haven’t even gotten her a gift!”

“I’m sure she won’t mind- “

“- My tests can all run on their own.” Katz stated firmly, “I’ll nip out to get a gift and then I can drop Fleming off. You don’t mind watching him for the afternoon do you, just with- “ She gestured vaguely at the scene all around them.

“- Yeah, we don’t want Jack to explode.” Will nodded, “Sure, we can keep an eye on him.”

“Thank you.” Katz clapped her hands together, “I’ll go and get something right now.”

……..

“Wonderful to see you.”

Will chuckled, seeing Hannibal smiling fondly at him, handing up a glass as Fleming went running off to find Mikel, doubling back to say hello and a thank you to Hannibal for inviting him, before setting off again.

“He has potential.” Hannibal chuckled, “I trust Jack didn’t put up too much of a fuss about you coming here?”

“He doesn’t know… and even if he did, nothing could stop me from being here.” Will looked over, beaming when he saw Mischa making her way towards him, wrapping his arms around her, “Happy Birthday darling, you look amazing.”

She really did.

In a version of the dress that was much more suited for a teenager, she looked like a slightly more grown up, Disney Princess, hair in a bun on top of her head as she beamed at him.

“You’re just in time for the present opening.”

“Ah, that’s much of a surprise to me as it is to you, so that’s always fun.”

Chuckling, they all headed into the living room, where the rest of the guests were waiting patiently. Some had fake smiles on their faces, clearly having only been invited for connection reasons. But the rest seemed nice enough.

“Thank you all for coming and for your wonderful gifts.” Hannibal greeted them all, glancing over to his right to see Fleming and Mikel playing quietly in the corner, Mikel shushing Fleming whenever he got too loud, “Before the party properly gets started, Mischa will open all these wonderful gifts, which I am sure she will be very thankful for.”

Of course, these were just the presents from the guests, along with a few minor ones from them.

The main presents were opened with the privacy of family.

Especially as this time, Mischa was getting a very special present.

They watched as Mischa got a variety of clothing, some that she might wear, others that she definitely wouldn’t (the silk scarfs from well-meaning mothers mostly), bath and spa things that would be left and forgotten on a shelf mostly, a record player for the vintage vinyl that she was collecting (from Mrs Komeda, who knew his daughter the best it seemed), makeup (a waste of time) and a gold necklace from them before the main presents.

“Thank you.” Mischa thanked, eyes lingering on Mrs Komeda for slightly longer than the others, hoping that the older woman would take the hint.

“And our present!”

Everyone chuckled as Fleming got to his feet, running back into the hallway and grabbing the present that Katz had handed to him, and that he’d left at the front door in his eagerness to see Mikel.

“Here!”

Mischa took it from him with a giggle and a fond smile, opening the present up, only to gasp in amazement. “Woah.” She whispered, pulling an ornately decorated book out of the packaging, “This is a… first edition Poirot!”

Fleming nodded proudly, “Papa said that he thought that you would like the series, because you like Sherlock Holmes.”

“I- thank you.” She reached down, pulling him into a quick hug, “And… please tell your parents thank you as well.”

…….

“I feel bad.”

Hannibal frowned as his daughter entered the room, after the guests had all gone and more thank yous were exchanged.

“Bad?”

She was back in her usual style of clothing, looking a little more comfortable.

“Fleming’s parents… technically, they’re working against us, and yet Mikel and their son are best friends, they got me an amazing birthday present.” She shuffled from side to side, “Would they do the same if they knew what we were.”

Hannibal knew this day was coming, holding out one arm and inviting her in for a hug.

“We won’t get caught.” He assured her, “However… should the worst happen- “

“- You can’t hurt them.”

He looked down at her in shock, seeing a fierce glare on her face, not unlike the one he’d seen on his beloved’s face.

“Swear to me, that no matter what happens, you won’t hurt Beverly, Price, Zeller or Fleming.”

“Mischa, it’s not that- “

“- Promise me.”

For a moment, they stared each other down, before Hannibal sighed, feeling more than a little annoyed with the situation.

“Fine… Should the worst happen, they will not suffer any repercussions.”

She pressed a kiss to his cheek, gave him a cheerful smile before flouncing out of the room.

Hannibal couldn’t help but think that he’d been played in some way.

……

“Hannibal? What are you doing?”

“I find myself in need of a little stress relief.”

“Well, we can always- “

“- The messing around with Jack kind.”

“Awww.”

NSFW Chapter!

“Hello?”

“Jack. Jack.”

Jack frowned, looking down at the phone, “Who is this?”

“Jack, it's Miriam… I don't know where I am. I can't see anything.”

“Miriam?”

“I was so wrong. I was so wrong!”

“Miriam?”

“Please... Jack. Please.”

……..

Will watched as Hannibal hung up the recording at the phone, the omega lying back against the pillows and taking a deep breath.

“So…” Will began, “… what’s wrong?”

“… I believe that Mischa is having doubts about our lifestyle. She’s grown… attached to Fleming and his parents and made me promise not to hurt them.”

“Ah.” Will could see why that might have stressed his mate out a little, leaning over and taking the man’s hand in his own, “It’s a phase, I’m sure.”

“… I can’t help but feel concerned that it’s not.”

Seeing that Hannibal would not be reassured verbally, Will leant over to give him a kiss, feeling Hannibal tense a little, before he relaxed into it, an omegian purr breaking free.

“Will.” Hannibal chuckled fondly as they pulled away from one another, “I sense that you are trying to distract me.”

“Hmm, maybe I am, maybe I’m not… is it working though?”

“Not quite.” Hannibal moved to sit on Will’s lap, “I think you need to try a little bit harder.” He rolled his hips, prompting Will to grab onto them in order to prevent him from bucking up too harshly and dislodging the omega from his lap. To completely prevent this from happening, he flipped both of them over with a deft roll, kissing along Hannibal’s jawline and down the tendon on the side of his neck.

He thrusted against the omega, leaving his marks behind on the slightly tanned skin, hearing Hannibal’s moans echoing throughout the room, his cock twitching in his pants. Gently, he peeled Hannibal’s pants off of him, cupping at that cock, before giving it a full stroke from base to tip.

“W-Will!”

Will smiled against the soft skin of Hannibal’s neck, twisting his wrist a little, continuing to rut as Hannibal came all over his hand with a groan, coming at the same time. Seeing the satisfied look on his omega’s face made Will’s inner Alpha purr.

“I think you have another one in you.” Will whispered, rolling them over and pulling at Hannibal until his mate was straddling his face. Hannibal shuddered all over when Will’s broad tongue pressed against his entrance, licking around the tight hole gently, pushing it in and making Hannibal groan.

Feeling Hannibal leaking over him, Will couldn’t help but mentally pat himself on the back.

Hannibal had hardened so quickly after his orgasm, and it was all thanks to Will’s actions.

“W-Will, you- “ Hannibal snapped, “- Get on with it.”

“Bossy, bossy.”

“William!”

Hmmm, he was still feeling a little tense then.

Will simply pushed his tongue in deeper, practically feeling Hannibal’s moan of pleasure. Grabbing at the omega’s hips, he twisted his tongue a little as Hannibal groaned and came again.

Gently, he rearranged them again to make sure that Hannibal was comfortable on his back, before grabbing the lube and slowly fingering Hannibal open, forcing high-pitched moans from his mouth.

“M-more, more!”

Will did as he was told, slipping one, then two more fingers into him, until he felt like Hannibal was ready for him. Using the rest of the slick, he lubed up his cock, pressing the head against the loosened hole, pushing in slowly, keeping a keen eye out for any signs of pain. He was all the way in before he stopped, waiting for Hannibal’s breathing to even out.

“W-Will! P-please!”

Will leant over for a kiss, before he started to move, thrusting in and out as Hannibal arched into the movement, whispered encouragements echoing throughout the room. He moved one of his hands to support Hannibal’s lower back and pulled out almost all the way, before thrusting in hard, making Hannibal choke on his next pleas. Each thrust punched out a small noises from the omega, the grunts coming from deep within his chest.

Will could feel the tension coiling in his stomach, leaning over for another kiss as he tried to hold on as long as he could. “C-close.”

“M-me too! M-more!”

Will fucked into the omega as firmly as he could, his thrusts getting more and more erratic until his mate tensed and came with a broken shout. The rhythmic clenching around Will’s cock, sent him over the edge, filling Hannibal with a low moan. He stayed there until his arms started shaking, before slowly pulling out and collapsing next to the other man.

It wasn’t long before Hannibal fell asleep, and Will breathed a sigh of relief.

Successful distraction.

He would speak to Mischa another time.

……

“I'm hooked into every carrier database and telephone provider in the United States. Nothing.”

“Look again!”

Will watched as Beverly sighed wearily, hoping that he didn’t look too amused at what was happening.

“I did my agains! And my again and again and agains. I can't find any electronic trace of any call made to your home at 2:46am.”

His omega really was a marvel.

“I am telling you that the phone rang.” Jack’s voice was low and dangerous.

“Wake your wife up?” Zeller asked.

“I was alone.”

Price spoke up this time, “Whoever made that call could have made it from box outside your house or a junction in your neighbourhood. Either way, there would be no trace signal to track.”

“You're sure it was Miriam Lass?”

“It was Miriam.”

Zeller rolled his eyes, “You haven't heard her voice in two years, Jack.” He then looked over at Will, “She was…possibly the last victim of the Ripper the last time he was active. She was a trainee investigating the matter, and then- “

“- She was captured by him.” Jack snapped, looking over at Zeller, “You gonna continue to question me on this, Z? If so, maybe I should ask you to leave the room while it's still safe for you to be here!”

“Hey!” Beverly snapped, “We’re trying to help Jack, but you’ve got to admit, it sounds a little- “

“- The Chesapeake Ripper recorded Miriam Lass two years ago as he was killing her. Last night, he called my house at 2:46am. He played that recording for me.”

Will was really struggling not to smile, clearing his throat, and drawing attention to him, “And we know The Chesapeake Ripper is not Doctor Gideon. We know the call wasn't made from the Baltimore state hospital for the criminally insane.” His beloved was a genius.

Giving him a thankful look, Beverly nodded, “That we would've been able to trace.”

“Are you certain it was a recording?” Will asked, hoping to plant just a small seed of doubt there… or make Jack snap and appear like he’d completely lost his mind. “Jack, you said yourself there is no body.”

“Miriam Lass is dead!” Jack snapped, “The Chesapeake Ripper is making it very clear that someone is plagiarizing his work!”

“It was 2:46 in the morning, Jack.” Zeller tried again, “You're in a deep sleep, you're roused, you're disoriented. You might not even know you're still asleep!”

“… I know when I'm awake.”

Chapter 39

“Jack’s shaken.” Will chuckled, “He’s trying not to show it, but he is definitely bothered by the entire situation.”

//And now, there is evidence against Gideon being the Ripper. \\

“Well, sort of. Unfortunately, you covered your tracks a little too well… there’s no proof any call at all was made, so the vast majority of people think that Jack is just having bad dreams.”

//But he will look further into the matter. \\

“With Gideon? Definitely?” Hearing footsteps stop outside the door, Will changed his tone just a little, “I’ll speak to you later darling, alright?”

//Speak to you later. \\

He hung up just as Alana entered the room, a soft look on her face, “Sorry to disturb you.” She whispered, “Everything okay?”

“Mikel had a bad dream last night.” Will lied smoothly, “I was just double checking that he was okay. Hannibal’s lullabies can only go so far.”

From the look on Alana’s face, it was clear that she was still struggling to come to terms with the idea of Hannibal being a parent like that. “Oh, what sort of bad dream?” She asked, before letting out a nervous chuckle, “Sorry, that’s the psychologist in me speaking.”

“Yeah… just about a monster in his room. The usual four-year-old nightmare.”

There was always a hint of truth in a lie.

So, what if he told her his dream instead of Mikel's?

Seeing a stag entering the bedroom in the dead of night was just a strange dream. Nothing to worry about, no matter how vivid or real it seemed.

That's what he kept telling himself.

"Ah." Alana nodded her head, clearly having heard it all before, only to turn when the door opened and Jack strode into the room, still looking more than annoyed at the phone conversation from earlier.

"We have a direct way of communicating with The Chesapeake Ripper, and we'd like see if we can push him."

"… Push him towards what?" Will frowned, knowing that his beloved had already been pushed and whilst Hannibal wasn't one to act rashly, even he had a breaking point.

"We might be able to influence him to become visible."

Oh, of course Alana was involved…he should have known.

"If we can enrage him."

"To what purpose, Jack?" Will frowned, already feeling exhausted from the conversation, "I-I don't see what you're asking."

"Do you think there's a way to push the Chesapeake Ripper and focus his attention?"

Oh, this was not going to go well, “Well, he's already focused on Gideon as his adversary. Don't fool around!”

“Gideon is just a tabloid rumour right now. We think we need to make him the truth.”

“You might push The Ripper to kill again just to prove he isn't in a hospital for the criminally insane?!” Because Will knew his beloved. Hannibal would snap and that would be that. Whilst he believed that Hannibal would be able to evade capture, the risk was still too great.

“I have to push, Will.”

And then it all clicked for Will, “Are you thinking about getting into bed… with Freddie Lounds?” He felt a little sick at the thought.

“You yourself know it's the best way to bait the real Chesapeake Ripper.”

“You’re playing with fire Jack.” Will shook his head, “And I’m not sure you’ll get out of this unburnt.”

…….

“What is this?”

Will winced as he entered the home. Vaguely, from the leaving room, he could hear Beauty and the Beast playing as Hannibal approached, ipad in hand.

The interview with Freddie Lounds had been yesterday.

Her interview with Gideon was this morning, so it was no surprise that the article ended up published already.

“William. What. Is. This.”

“This…” Will took the ipad from him, seeing the bold print of CHESAPEAKE RIPPER at the top of the article, along with a picture of Gideon, “… is Jack’s attempt to lure the Ripper out by pissing him off.” He raised an eyebrow, “Are you pissed off Hannibal?”

“You know that I am!” Hannibal snapped, turning the ipad back towards himself, “This trash is claiming that Gideon is the Ripper and THAT’S why he’s been inactive?!”

“It’s part of Jack’s plan to lure you out, you know this.” Will attempted to pull his omega into a kiss, only for Hannibal to harshly pull away, “Don’t fall for it.”

“Fall for it?!” Hannibal’s voice might be low, not wanting to alert the children what was going on, but it made it no less dangerous sounding, “Fall for it?!”

“Hannibal- “

“- If Jack wants to play this game, then we can play this game.” Hannibal shoved the ipad into Will’s chest, storming off with a huff as Will looked up at the ceiling and sighed.

He… was sleeping on the sofa tonight, he just knew it.

……..

Of course, he was right.

Will shuffled a little, trying to make himself as comfortable as possible, sipping on some whiskey as he thought about the case. They had to draw attention away from Gideon, but without risking Jack catching them. Easier said than done when the man was on the warpath.

Upstairs, he heard the vague sounds of movement.

Both the children were fast asleep, so it was probable that it was Hannibal. As much as the omega hated to admit it, he hated going to sleep without Will's around him, the side effect of being married for so many years.

A couple minutes of silence passed, the sounds continued up again as Will finished off the glass and lay down fully, pretending that he had no problems at all falling asleep. The dogs reacted a little when they heard the creaking on the stairs, but soon settled back into sleep, as Will continued to keep his breathing slow and even.

With everything quiet, it was easy to hear Hannibal making his way down the steps.

He then heard a small tut when Hannibal presumingly saw the glass on the table, followed by his arm being raised and tucked into place around the omega as Hannibal lay in front of him, his back to Will's chest. Will fought back to instinctive chuckle, pulling Hannibal closer as the omega sighed happily and relaxed into sleep.

"Jack's going to speak to Gideon alone tomorrow." He mumbled into the back of Hannibal's neck, "I'm sure he would appreciate a call."

"Hmm, you have the best ideas."

……..

"You're home early."

Jack frowned at the silence.

“Bella? Something wrong?”

‘Jack, it’s Miriam! I don't know where I am. I can't see anything. I was so wrong. I was so wrong. Please... Jack. Please… I don’t want to die like this.’

And then the signal cut out.

……

“In my house. In my bedroom… where my wife sleeps.”

Will watched as the prints were removed from the phone. As if Hannibal would have left evidence like that behind.

“I’ve dusted the phone, got a lot of usable prints, nice detail too. I got three distinct beauties here. Yours, your wife’s and presumably, The Chesapeake Ripper.”

“I can’t imagine the Ripper’s going to start leaving prints behind at his crime scenes now.” Zeller muttered, as Will nodded in agreement. Still, it would be interesting to find out whose print that was.

“The Ripper put his head on your wife’s pillow.” Katz then reported, pulling a long hair off of the fabric as Jack turned to Will.

“And now somebody’s sleeping in my bed!”

“…Was Miriam Lass a blonde?” Katz asked slowly.

“Yes.”

Price then cleared his throat, “I pulled her fingerprints from the VICAP database, Jack…and I got a match.”

“She’s dead! She was never here!”

“Jack…” Will sighed, trying to hide his pride for his gorgeous omega. This was going to drive Jack to the brink of insanity, “...Did Miriam know where you live?”

“... If she wanted to know, she was smart enough to find out. She could have told the Ripper before he killed her.”

Will leant forwards, “Did you know you were sending her after him?”

“I sent her after information.” Jack snapped.

“Jack, whoever made that call, whoever is making these calls, thinks you were close to Miriam Lass and therefore feel responsible for her death.”

Jack’s face fell, as Will bit back his smirk.

Got him.

Chapter 40

Will was on the phone to Jack, Mischa was doing her homework in her room, Mikel was colouring in the living room as Hannibal made dinner in the kitchen.

“Give me some space.” He quietly ordered a couple of the dogs, who had decided not to stay with Mikel or Will, lightly pushing at one of them when they shuffled a little closer, “Go on. Give me some space.”

He looked behind him into the living room, seeing Mikel giggling when Cerberus licked his cheek, tiny fingers running through the soft fur.

Cerberus was growing quite rapidly, and Hannibal felt secure in the knowledge that the puppy was loyal to his son and would protect him.

“The dogs are all going into the back room.” Hannibal gently instructed the four year old, “Including Cerberus.”

Mikel looked up in dismay.

“But- “

“- I know.” Hannibal held up a hand to stop him, “But when we have guests over, who might not like dogs, they have to be in that room, including Cerberus. They’ll just sleep, you know this.”

Mikel still didn’t look too happy with the idea, but sighed with a nod and went to pick up his art supplies, putting them on the side table, before going to try and herd the dogs into the back room.

At that moment, there was a knock on the door, prompting Hannibal to look up at the ceiling with a weary sigh.

Dinner with a woman who fancied his husband, just a little…and a Doctor he was going to display in the most beautiful way one day.

What could possibly go wrong?

……..

“To The Chesapeake Ripper.”

Mischa didn’t even try to hide the fact that she was rolling her eyes as Doctor Chilton held his own toast. She didn’t back down when the man turned his gaze to her, giving her a slightly patronising smile.

“Dr. Gideon is going to provide us with a singular opportunity to analyze a pure sociopath.” He explained to her, “It is so rare to find one in captivity.”

“Assuming that he is the Ripper.” Mischa muttered, glancing over at Will, who was taking a sip of his drink, clearly fighting back a smile.

Chilton didn’t seem to know how to reply that, thankfully interrupted when Hannibal walked into the room with the plates of food. “Ah.” He practically sighed in relief, “Dinner is served?”

“Inspired by Auguste Escoffier, we are having Langue d'agneau en papillottes, served with a sauce of duxelles and oyster mushrooms.” Hannibal stated, “Picked by myself and Mikel here.”

Mikel nodded firmly, “When we went to walk the dogs.”

“Precisely.“

“I don’t think I’ve ever had tongue.” Alana eyed the plate, as Hannibal chuckled.

“It was a particularly chatty lamb.”

Chilton’s laugh was obnoxious and loud, drowning out Mischa’s own snigger.

“The romans used to kill flamingos just to eat their tongues.” The Doctor pointed out, as Hannibal shot Mischa a quick wink.

“Don't give us any ideas. Your tongue is very feisty.” Hannibal glanced over at Will, who was carefully looking away from the guests, trying not to draw too much attention to just how much he liked the sound of that, “And as this evening has already proven, it's nice to have an old friend for dinner.”

For a moment, they all ate in silence.

In fact, it wasn’t until the meal was mostly finished, that the silence was broken, with Alana clearing her throat, “I see three possibilities.”

“Mm-hmm.”

“Gideon is The Chesapeake Ripper, or he just thinks he is, or he knows he isn't.” Alana looked Chilton right in the eyes at the statement, making him bluster just a little, before he cleared his throat.

“…He is….He knows he is and so do I.”

“Did you discuss the Chesapeake Ripper’s crimes with Dr Gideon before he murdered the night nurse?” Hannibal asked nonchalantly.

“Hannibal, the children- “

“- Mischa has pointed out that she has gone through much worse than a gruesome subject at the dinner table, and Mikel very rarely pays attention when he’s eating.” Hannibal gave her a reassuring smile, before turning back to Chilton and repeating the question.

“Mmmhmm, when I began to suspect what he was.” Chilton took a sip of his drink, “Fearing he might be exposed may have, uh, spurred him into action.”

“Is it possible you inadvertently planted the suggestion in Gideon's mind that he was The Ripper?” Alana asked softly.

“You're not suggesting coercive persuasion?”

“Alana was being kind.” Will sighed, “She said inadvertently.”

“…Psychic driving is unethical.”

“But reasonable in certain circumstances.”

“… What circumstances?”

Alana sounded just as confused as Will felt, looking up at Hannibal, who was avoiding eye contact.

“It may have been useful trying to remind Gideon he's the Chesapeake Ripper, if he repressed those memories.” Hannibal paused, “But he seems to have come to that awareness all by himself.”

There was a brief pause, where Dr Chilton was clearly trying to figure out what the correct response was, before he focused on Alana, “Dr. Bloom, if he has been unethically manipulated somehow… I need to know. I would love your insight.”

Alana clearly didn’t trust him, and Will respected her for that.

Hannibal however, threw him another curveball, “Dr. Chilton, would you care to assist me with dessert?”

“…It would be a pleasure.”

“Me too please!” Mikel piped up, “Please Motina?”

“Of course....once you finish everything on your plate.”

……..

“I love Norton grapes. Same colour inside as outside. Peel it... And the flesh is also purple.”

Chilton looked a little unsure as to what was happening, glancing over at Mikel, who was carefully washing the grapes, humming some sort of music, not caring about whatever the adults were doing.

“Not like other grapes where flesh is white and colour comes from the skin.” Hannibal continued,

Chilton cleared his throat with a weak chuckle, "A grape with nothing to hide.”

And then Hannibal seized control of the conversation, “Were I in your position, I would have attempted psychic driving.” he leant back, “... Perhaps you already have.”

“I-I-” Chilton looked back over at Mikel, and then at Hannibal who waved a hand in dismissal.

“He’s four. I can assure you that none of what we’re saying is of any interest to him.” He started putting the final touches on the plates, accepting the newly washed grapes with a gentle kiss to Mikel’s head, “I promise I am much more forgiving of the unorthodox than Dr. Bloom.” he then collected up the plates, “Shall we?”

….....

Barely four minutes passed, before Will cornered Hannibal in the kitchen.

“What was that all about?”

Hannibal didn’t look away from his washing, humming lightly in response to the question.

“Hannibal?”

“Chilton is… someone you are naturally suspicious about.” Hannibal stated, “There’s a look in his eyes, a tone in his voice that indicates that he shouldn’t be trusted in the slightest.” He glanced at Will, “Imagine what else we can frame him for… should the need arise?”

Will stared at him for a moment, before pulling him into a bruising kiss. “Genius.” He muttered, “Where do we start?”

….

// “Jack. Jack, it's Miriam.” \\

Chapter 41

Nine times out of ten, Will knew exactly what people thought of him.

The rumours that spread throughout the FBI Academy, where his brief visits garnered whispered comments in the hallways and nervous looks from the first years.

“Would it be better if they truly knew the real you?” Hannibal had said one night, when he brought it up one evening, “Only I am allowed to see the real you.”

That sentence ran through his mind as he got into the car with Bev, the forensic scientist tense as they drove to an observatory out in the middle of nowhere. Hannibal had been very secretive about the next stage in his plan, and Will was looking forward to this.

“The last call was made to Jack's cell from a disposable phone traced here...” Bev sighed, looking around the area as they arrived, “… Or within 100 feet of here.”

“What was Miriam Lass looking into?”

“Medical records. If The Ripper was a surgeon, she thought he might've treated one of his victims.”

That was hitting dangerously close to the truth.

“Have they retraced her steps?”

How close could they be to finding the truth?

“The ones that they could find.” Bev sighed, “She made a jump somewhere they couldn’t explain.” She looked over at him, “You make those jumps.”

“…The evidence has to be there.”

They saw Jack in the distance, standing by the entrance to the observatory.

“Every surgeon that came into contact with any of The Ripper victims has been thoroughly vetted or they are currently under observation.”

“Including Doctor Gideon?”

“Doctor Gideon wasn’t in my bedroom.” Jack snapped, overhearing that part of the conversation, “The Chesapeake Ripper was.” He pulled his phone out of his pocket, “The last call left something the others didn’t… a phone number.”

Will could barely contain his excitement.

What had his omega planned out for them?

Jack called the number, all of them hearing a ringing coming from inside the observatory. It was a little eery, hearing it echoing around the area the way that it did, as they slowly entered the building, and then headed up the stairs. Entering the top floor, seeing that phone ringing on a surgical table, held tightly in the grasp of a severed arm, Will was sure he was going to pass out from how quickly he hardened in his pants. Under the guise of giving Jack space, he turned away and moved to readjust himself.

He needed to see Hannibal.

……..

“Sssh.” Will hushed as he rocked, maddeningly slow, in and out of Hannibal’s body, “We don’t have long and we don’t want Mikel to hear, do we?”

He knew that Jack wanted to speak to Hannibal about the finding, as the arm was taken back to the crime labs.

With Mikel down for a nap, and no patients waiting to see his omega, Will decided that now would be the best time to show Hannibal just how much he appreciated him and that cunning little mind.

Hannibal clawed at his back, fingers sliding over the flannel shirt as he tried to pull the Alpha closer. “W-will, you- “

“- I can’t believe you cut her arm off, just to make Jack squirm. And that note…’What do you see?’ Perfection.”

Laughing at the breathless tone in Will’s voice, writhing a little and clenching down on the cock inside of him, Hannibal just about managed to focus on him, “I-I thought you would appreciate it.” He groaned when Will grinded against his prostate, a truly pornographic moan echoing throughout the room as Will snapped his hips, hitting deep, as he struggled to try and contain it, “W-will! Mikel is in the o-other room!”

Will slowed down, only to nip at the sensitive mating bite, making Hannibal whine sharply, clenching down again as Will rolled his hips.

“You’re the one making the noises.” Will whispered, “I thought you had better self-control than this.”

Hannibal wanted to protest, only for Will to slide his cock out and flip him onto his belly. He was manhandled until his ass was in the air and his knees were spread wide, face pressed into the desk. The pressure slightly restricted his breathing, but it was effective for muting his wail as Will pounded into him, showing him no mercy.

He resisted the urge to scratch at the wooden desk, knowing just how much it cost to varnish this type of wood, feeling Will hammering into him without restraint. Will's free hand wrapped around his throbbing cock, squeezing and twisting exactly how he liked it; rough and just a little painful.

Will chuckled darkly at Hannibal faint, guttural cries before he leant in close, lips tracing the shell of Hannibal's ear, voice pitched low, "If it weren't for the fact that it's a crime scene, I would take you to that observatory and take you there."

The idea made Hannibal come with a groan, feeling Will halt and come inside of him. The pair of them remained where they were for a moment or two, before Will slowly pulled out.

"I should go and see Jack… offer my condolences and everything." He leant over to press a kiss to Hannibal, chuckling when Hannibal weakly returned it, "I'll see you later?"

Hannibal nodded weakly, barely registering as Will left, before he moved to re-dress himself and get himself neatened out.

Will would pay for that.

……..

Mikel was half asleep in his arms when Hannibal heard the knocking on the door.

Will was washing up, Mischa was doing her homework in her room, leaving Hannibal and Mikel to appreciate the cool evening and the clear and starry evening above them, fireflies fluttering all around them.

The knocking on the door was loud to startle a couple of the dogs, who started to bark, prompting Will to emerge from the kitchen as Hannibal made his way back in.

“Who- “

“- I will get it.” Hannibal gently moved Mikel over to one arm and opened the door, unsurprised to see Jack standing there as he waved the man inside. “Please. Have a seat in the living room. I just need to put Mikel to bed.”

“…It’s almost like you were expecting me.”

“I sensed this might be happening.” Hannibal headed into the kitchen, seeing that Will was already drying his hands, “Can you please put Mikel in his room?”

“Was that Jack I heard?”

“I have it under control.”

Will nodded, taking Mikel and heading up the stairs, taking his time as Cerberus rushed to follow. As he was going, Hannibal poured him and Jack glass of wine. When he returned to the living room, Jack was in a chair, right by the fire, staring into the flickering flames.

He handed him the glass and took the seat next to him.

For a moment, there was nothing but silence before Jack spoke up.

“The Ripper has been messing with me.” Jack whispered, “He made me believe that Miriam was alive.”

“Messing with you? What would be the benefit of making you believe your trainee was alive?”

“Hope.” Jack whispered, still looking into the flames, “The Ripper wanted to cloud my vision with hope.”

“…It can sometimes be brave to allow yourself hope.”

“Not the false kind.”

Hannibal glanced over at the Alpha, sensing that this was more than a simple case of a missing agent. “Don’t give up hope for you wife. Not yet….she’s lost hope, which means that you can’t.”

“I don’t have any control over that.”

“Take control.” He bit back a comment about that’s what Alphas’ tend to do, clearing his throat, “I’m sorry about your wife, Jack. I truly am. I believe the world is a better place with her in it.” He sipped at the wine, “I am also sorry about your trainee.”

Jack shook his head, “Whatever the Ripper was doing, it worked. I mean… I though she was alive. For a moment, anyway…I actually let myself believe something I knew was impossible.”

They sat there in silence for a moment, before Hannibal spoke up again.

“Talk to me about her. What was she like?”

As if he didn’t already know.

Chapter 42

Two Years Earlier

Hannibal sighed as he finished up the last of his paperwork. In the corner of the room, Mikel was currently officiating a wedding between two of his teddies, which was possibly the only bit of peace that he had had all day.

His brain was frazzled, and he was sure that he had misspelled some words in these files.

More work for him to do tomorrow, rewriting out all the pages that he had made foolish mistakes on, whilst trying to deal with Mikel throwing no fewer than seven tantrums all day.

And then there was a knock on the door.

“Be good.” He warned his two-year-old, before heading over to the door, opening it up to see a young woman standing there, a soft smile on her face.

“My name is Miriam Lass.” She greeted, “I'm with the FBI…I would show you my credentials, but I'm actually just a trainee.”

He returned the soft smile. “Never just a trainee. An agent in training.” he moved to one side, “Please. Come in.”

When she entered, her eyes automatically landed on Mikel who curiously looked back at her.

“My son.” Hannibal stated, “Don’t worry, he’ll be lost in his wedding ceremonies soon. It's been a bit of a dramatic lead up to the special day, isn’t that right Mikel?”

“Hm.” Mikel nodded, looking back at the teddies as Miriam looked around.

“I was hoping to talk to you about a former patient... Not necessarily one of yours, but someone you may have come into contact with when you were a practicing physician.”

Slowly, Hannibal took a seat at his desk, “I haven't practiced medicine for some time, not since getting married and moving out here, but fortunately for you, I have a very good memory... Please.”

He had a bad feeling about all this, a niggling feeling at the back of his mind.

“His name was Jeremy Olmstead.”

His most recent victim.

This was not good at all.

“Perhaps not so good a memory after all.” He made a show of sighing wearily, “I don't recall a patient with that name, but it sounds familiar.”

She moved closer, “He was recently found murdered in his workshop. We think he may be a victim of The Chesapeake Ripper.”

“Ah, that's why he sounds familiar. It was all over the news.”

“He had two old scars on his thigh.” She continued, already starting to look a bit disappointed with how this was going, “Pathology checked with the local hospital. He had fallen out of a tree-blind five years ago while bow hunting... Stuck an arrow through his leg. The doctor of record was a resident surgeon, but you were on duty in the ER that night.”

She was good.

“I was?”

“Your name was on the admissions log.”

He hummed to himself, “Let me think. You'll have to forgive me. I saw so many people in the ER, but not so many hunters.”

Nodding in understanding, the disappointment only seemed to increase, “It's been a long time since the accident…” She accepted, “… but I thought you may remember if anything was fishy with the arrow wound?”

He slowly got to his feet, “If it's the gentleman I'm thinking of, I vaguely remember a fellow hunter bringing him in, but I recall very little else.”

“Yeah… I figured it was a long shot.”

“I did keep detailed journals during those days. If you like, I can get them for you. Maybe you'll find something helpful?”

“That would be great... If you don't mind.”

“Not at all.” He gestured to the ladders that med to the upper levels of the office, “If you'll wait here, maybe just an eye on Mikel here, I'll be right back.”

“Thank you.”

He moved up the ladder, watching as she headed over to the desk. Slowly, he moved back down, removing his shoes so as to make as little noise as possible, creeping up behind her, seeing the moment where she found that diagram that he had foolishly forgotten to put away. Before she could make a noise, his arm was around her throat and a hand was over her mouth.

Mikel watched in curiosity as he held firm to the squirming woman for a moment or two, before she finally went limp. He then lay her on the floor as his son got to his feet.

“Dead?”

“…Not yet.”

Hannibal pulled out his mobile phone, calling an all too familiar number.

“William dear…we have a bit of a problem.”

Present Day

“Apparently, there are going to be a series of lectures on the Chesapeake Ripper at the academy.” Will stated, as they watched Mikel running after the colourful butterflies that fluttered around, following them to the flowers, “Jack wanted me to lead them, but I shut that down.”

“Hmm.”

“It was tempting…getting the chance to see all your gorgeous crime scene photos pinned up on a board for me to stare at, but I don’t think I could have kept myself in check.”

Hannibal chuckled, leaning over and pressing a kiss to his husband’s cheek, “We both know that isn’t true. If there is one thing you are a master of, it is keeping calm.”

“…They’ll probably mention Miriam Lass in the lecture.”

“I hope they do. It will be a good warning for anymore agents in training and Jack himself, not to go out on your own to investigate a case.” Hannibal smirked, “An important lesson to learn…. You do remember that we have the performance this evening to go to?”

“…Yes?”

“I’ve laid your suit out on the bed.”

Oh, the things one did for love.

….

“We look like Beauty and the Beast.” Mikel stated, watching as the rest of his family put the finishing touches to their outfit. He was wearing a very dark blue blazer that was lined with extravagant gold and silver detailing. There was a vest and a shirt underneath, with black pants and shoes. Meanwhile, his sister was wearing a golden dress that complimented his own detailing.

It was floor length and off the shoulder. The corset-esque top (not really due to the tailing and her age) was embroidered with blue flowers. She was also wearing elbow-length gloves, although it was clear that she was already debating taking them off.

“You do.” Hannibal sighed. His colour scheme had back-fired slightly, as whilst it was subtle, it might still be noticeable by the parents attending the evening’s performance, “Let’s try and act like beauties and not beasts, hmm?”

Mikel nodded, even as Mischa sighed. “Can we at least make our excuses early?”

“We will leave, when I say that we do.”

He didn’t miss the look Will and Mischa shot each other, sighing mentally as he lifted Mikel into his arms.

“At least you’ll appreciate this evening.”

Chapter 43

Hannibal took great pride in his son's manners. Whereas most children would be squirming in their seats, bouncing up and down and generally being a nuisance, Mikel was staring at the performance with wide eyes.

He knew that Mikel would enjoy watching a live performance of the music that he loved so much, and this singer was going beyond all expectations that Hannibal had. Closing his eyes, he relaxed and simply let himself listen.

Mischa and Will seemed to be discussing something to the other side of him, but they were doing it quietly, so he chose to let it go.

For now.

....

"I tell you, I could not get my son to treat his clothes so well." One of the society women cooed, as Mikel clung to Hannibal's leg, "Not even a scuff on the shoe, you should be very proud!"

"Oh, I am." Hannibal chuckled, "A little prince in the making."

They all agreed, before the conversation turned to something else.

"It's been too long since you've properly cooked for us, Hannibal." Mrs Komeda beamed, as Hannibal chuckled, "I bet your children are very helpful in the kitchen."

"In their own ways, yes. Come over and I will cook for you anytime."

“I said properly, that means dinner and the show.” She turned to a lady that Hannibal hadn’t seen before, “It’s an entire performance. The Christmas party was gorgeous, but he used to throw such exquisite dinner parties.”

“Mrs Komeda- “

“-You heard me.” She pouted, “Now, I know you’re very busy, but I don’t think I can survive on birthday and holiday parties alone.”

“I will, once inspiration strikes. I cannot force a feast, a feast must present itself.”

That, and he needed to give Will enough warning.

“It’s a dinner party, not a unicorn!”

“Oh, but the feast is life. You put the life in your belly and you live.”

Mrs Komeda laughed, the conversation continuing for a few moments more before she caught something out of the corner of her eyes. “Ah...I believe this young man is trying to get your attention.”

Hannibal looked over, trying not to visibly grimace when he saw Franklin standing there, an Alpha just behind him.

“Hello.” He greeted his patient softly, one hand reaching down to make sure that Mikel was close at hand.

“Hi! It’s so good to see you!” Franklin was oblivious to Hannibal’s tension, “This is my friend Tobias.”

“Good evening.”

Mrs Komeda was watching the proceedings with interest, “How do you two know each then?” She asked.

“There should remain some mystery to my life outside the opera- “ Hannibal began, only for Franklin to cut him off.

“- I'm one of his patients.”

Cue the awkward silence.

Clearing his throat, Hannibal tried to change the subject. “Did you enjoy the performance?”

“I did. I loved it! Every minute!”

“His eyes kept wandering.” Tobias stated, matter-of-factly, “More interested in you than what was happening on stage.” His eyes trailed Hannibal from head to toe, lingering on Mikel for a moment, before focusing back on his face, “I can see why.”

“My Alpha will be pleased that you approve.” Hannibal’s voice was cold, and he could see the sheer outrage on Mrs Komeda’s face, “Speaking of which, I should try and find him. Franklyn, good to see you.”

“You too.”

Hannibal merely nodded at the Alpha, before going to try and find Will.

He didn't need to look far though, seeing Will standing there with a dark expression on his face.

"That Alpha- "

"- Was being rude." Hannibal admitted, "Alas, I was unable to get a business card from him."

"Hm."

"I am sure that is not the last we've seen of him. Now, shall we be going."

"Please."

"…Mrs Komada would like a dinner party at some point in the near future."

"I may need some persuading."

"That I can manage."

…..

The phone buzzed on the bedside table, showing no signs of stopping anytime soon.

Will groaned, blindly reaching out and grabbing the phone, "Hello?"

Hannibal stirred on the other side of the bed, pushing himself up and looking over at his husband. He couldn't hear the other end of the conversation, but there was something in

Will's expression that told him that it wasn't good.

"I'll be there." He then hung up, as Will turned to him, "Jack needs to see me…are you going to be okay?"

"My muscles are pleasantly aching, but I'm sure I can manage." Hannibal chuckled, "Go on."

….

"The victim was found in a hotel room bathtub, there were abdominal mutilations and organ removal on the scene."

Will rolled his eyes.

Every time there was anything to do with organ removal, Jack dived headlong into the Ripper headspace.

"Sounds more like an urban legend than the Chesapeake Ripper, no?"

"I've had the room sealed. You'll get it fresh."

"Fresh? Fresh as a daisy?"

"Fresh enough for you to tell me whether or not it's the Ripper. Then you can go back to doing whatever you want."

"I wanted to have a nice quiet day with my family, or in my shop. What I DON'T want to be doing, is wrapping my head so tight around this Ripper, that he's all I can think about."

He was already all Will could think about.

“Your bad luck that you’re the best, pal.”

“Expecting another couple of bodies after this one?”

“If it’s the Ripper, yes, I am.” Jack’s fingers tightened on the wheel of the car, as Will eyed him in concern.

“Don’t let the Ripper stir you up.”

Please, please let the Ripper stir you up.

“The reason he left you Miriam Lass’s arm is so he could poke you with it.”

He couldn’t think about it too much. Getting a hard on in the car would be…uncomfortable to explain.

“Why not the rest of her? His other victims, he wanted to humiliate in death, like-like a public dissection! She was different, why?!”

“…He was probably impressed that she was able to find him.” Will ventured, remembering that yes, whilst Hannibal had been impressed that Lass had figured it out, he was more frustrated at his own mistakes and fearful that they had come so close to getting caught.

“He may be starting another cycle, Will.”

"…The Ripper contacted you directly. If he was killing again, he wouldn't be subtle about it, he would just pick up the phone." Will looked over, already knowing the answer to the next question he was going to ask, "Any more phone calls, Jack?"

"…No."

Lie.

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